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 TEMPLE BAR 2468 MARCH 31 1956 VOLUME 99 NUMBER 2596

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR



Laurent in the studio of his house at Eastbourne

WHEN Laurent, the Belgian-born artist who is illustrating Nevil Shute's *Beyond The Black Stump*, settled in Eastbourne after the war it looked as though his painting days were over. He hadn't touched a brush since 1940, his hands were calloused from rope-climbing in a British Army commando unit, and he had a wife and two daughters, Maureen and Monica, to keep. "I went searching for a cheap suit of tails so that I could be a waiter," he says. Just in time he found a job with a display firm, and began working every night on illustrations to show agents.

He still lives in Eastbourne, but now, at thirty-four, he has a charming house—and there's a Jaguar in the garage. He still works hard, painting from 6.30 a.m. ("five in summer—I just can't sleep") till 10.30 p.m. The only interruptions come from two-year-old Janine, who can reach the handle of his studio door.

For his Shute serial illustrations Laurent makes a pencil sketch on water-colour paper pasted to cardboard and then paints it. He uses thin poster colour—the whole range of his palette for the full-colour paintings, red, white and black for the two-colour illustrations (pages 14 and 15), and black and white with touches of charcoal for monotonies (pages 16 and 17). If the effect warrants it, he adds pastel and chalk with his thumb.

IN the Newclare district of Johannesburg a native woman ran from her house shrieking that a tokoloshi was inside. In no time the township was in an uproar, chasing a black, sleek demon through the streets—until the police shot it. It was a seal.

"But," says Ronald Byron, a doctor who often visits Newclare, "most of the people would not believe that. To them it was a tokoloshi, an evil spirit, and that was the end of it for them." Not, however, for Byron. From the incident he gained the idea for his first JOHN BULL story, *The Tokoloshi's Ball Pen* (page 26).

Byron lives in a middle-class suburb of Johannesburg with his wife Zena, "four rowdy and (so say I) remarkably intelligent children, and one surprisingly stupid dog." He is thirty-seven, an individualist with a keen dislike of mass thinking and strong views on the evil influence of witch-doctors on superstitious natives. "The witch-doctor," he says, "believes in the ancient lore and is convinced he can bring good fortune into your life; he can also set your enemy's house on fire if you pay him enough. But there is nothing old-fashioned about him. He lives in a modern house, dresses in natty European clothes and drives an American car."

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Free Speech

- Training ground for young musicians
- Who holds the key to cheaper food?
- History lessons with a modern touch

I BELIEVE that the musical world lacks one important feature—a full-time orchestra for young people.

It would mean much to students leaving musical colleges if they could join an orchestra composed entirely of people of their own age and position. It would set a high standard of performance, attracting as it would the best of the younger musicians. And if there were an age and time limit for membership, there would be an endless flow of experienced players to the country's great orchestras.—F. R. W., London, S.W.13.

"There are many students' orchestras, but they are all unpaid," says the Royal College of Music. "A full-time one sounds a very good idea, but it would not be economic—even first-rate orchestras are heavily subsidized." Last year, four of Britain's leading orchestras each received a grant of £12,000 from the Arts Council.

Happy Ending

Looking through some old copies of JOHN BULL, I came across Petts's cover showing a young couple choosing an engagement ring. Was this the



The engagement—by Petts

couple who later visited the vicar? The faces and clothes are very much alike.—R. M. L., London, W.1.

"I feel like the father of the bride and the best man rolled into one," says Petts. "The first cover in this romance appeared in JOHN BULL for November 26, last year. The second, the visit to the vicar, appeared on March 3. The wedding, of course, is this week."

Aid For Farmers

As a farm worker, I am certain that the farmer doesn't want subsidies ("Free Speech," March 3), but he is forced to take them because of uneconomic prices offered for his products.

The millions paid to agriculture go into the pockets of the big feeding-stuff firms and the middlemen, who grow fat at our expense.—G. E. MODEN, Prestwood, Bucks.

... "Dearer potatoes followed the formation of the Potato Marketing Board" ("Free Speech," March 3) implies that the Board was responsible for dearer potatoes, which is not true.

The Board does not control prices and it did nothing to restrict what was grown last year; nor could it have done so had it wished. Because the crop had become less profitable to farmers, they grew 52,000 acres less than the previous year, and because

the weather was very dry, the yield of what was grown was also less. As prices are free, the price level naturally responds to the volume of supply and demand.—R. HERBERT, General Manager, Potato Marketing Board, London, S.W.1.

... What moral right have farmers to be kept at our expense? If farming doesn't pay, farmers should work at something which doesn't require charity in the form of subsidies.

We could live cheaply on foreign produce, which at present bears heavy import duty.—L. P., Leeds.

Painless

Reading of the man without pain (JOHN BULL, March 3) reminded me of an old man I used to see at Victoria Station, London, many years ago. He used to sell matches, studs and shoelaces, and he, too, could feel no pain. He would let you stick a hatpin through his forearm, and for a couple of coppers sew a button on his stomach.—J. B. COLLOR, Church Road, Dover, Kent.

Costlier Cuppa

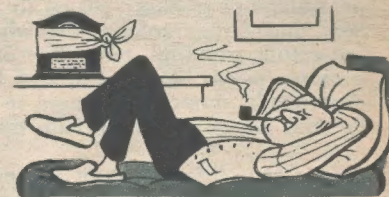
When the price of tea rose to an absurd level, local cafés raised their prices for a cup of tea to fourpence—in some cases, fivepence.

Since then the price of tea has steadily fallen, until today it is far lower than before. Yet the café and restaurant proprietors maintain the increased prices.—P. MEYER, West Pontnewydd, Monmouthshire.

"Until tea went up, the increased cost of milk, sugar and china had been borne by proprietors," says the National Caterers' Federation. "For us, the higher cost of tea was the last straw. The caterer is working on a lower profit margin than at any time in the last ten or twelve years and some of the increased costs must be passed on."

Clocked Out

Why is it that when an employee retires after many years with one firm, as my husband has, he gets a clock as a farewell present? I can think of nothing more tactless. Surely people who retire want to forget time, not to



be continually reminded of the lack of it.—Mrs. J. B., York.

Up To Date

I spent five years at school learning about historical events between the Stone Age and 1918, so, like many of my friends, I know little of the history of this country and others between 1918 and 1956.

Surely young people should have a good knowledge of world affairs instead of hazy ideas given them by father and his newspaper.—B. SCORR, Combe Park, Bath, Wiltshire.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



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Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

ordinary level, candidates can be questioned on English history up to 1931, and on European history up to 1933.

A grammar school headmaster says: "Quite a bit of history up to the present day is done in our fourth form: recently this has included Soviet Russia, the rise and fall of Germany, and the causes of the last war. We also have a discussion society at which current affairs are discussed."

Fare's Fair

Many people must be having opportunities for free bus rides these days. I am constantly having to remind conductors that they haven't taken my fare. What will be the result of this negligence? With less money coming in than there should be, bus companies will be increasing fares again to pay for running costs and wages. If this happens, I will not be so eager to "force" my fares on indifferent bus conductors.—Miss C. F. POWNALL, Homefield Road, Wimbledon, London, S.W.19.



Air Raid

During the cold weather, I was having tea with a friend, and we were both looking out of her cottage window at the hens huddled together outside. Suddenly a big seagull came down a few yards from them, and after a look round made straight for the henhouse door. A moment later he came out with a new-laid egg in his beak. He ate it, shell and all, in front of the hens, and they just stared.—Mrs. M. MELVIN, Richmondhill Road, Aberdeen.

Strong Medicine

Why the discrepancy between civil courts and courts-martial? Looking through my Army Reserve documents, I notice that the maximum punishment for failing to comply with a training notice is a £25 fine in a civil court or two years' imprisonment at a court-martial.

Two years in prison would mean a loss of about £1,000 in wages, loss of job and probably a broken home as well. I would hope to go before a local J.P. and not get marched off by the military police.—W. P. JONES, Newtown, Montgomeryshire.

... A soldier was recently detained for fifty-five days before appearing at his court-martial. On another occasion a Guardsman was detained for seventy-seven days before his trial. Despite the long periods in custody, the men were sentenced to

further detention.—D. A. KEPPEL, Talbot Square, London, W.2.

"The fact that a soldier has been in custody awaiting trial has to be taken into account by the court," says a lawyer. "Military service makes severe discipline inevitable, but a soldier is generally put under open arrest while awaiting trial, unless the charge is very serious and there is reason to think that he might abscond."

Unpopular Prices

Can nothing be done to control the prices charged by manufacturers of popular products for spares and replacement parts?

For example, I recently paid more than a shilling for a plastic cup top for a vacuum flask, while a cup of similar shape and size in a chain store would cost only fourpence or fivepence.

Having sold the original product, a manufacturer, knowing that replacements can be obtained only from him, seems to take advantage of his monopoly.—J. H. MATHEWS, London, S.E.25.

Share The Burden

Only householders are eligible for jury service ("Free Speech," March 3) and consequently there is an unequal burden.

I think jury service should apply to all adults, like the franchise. If everyone on the registers of electors, except those legally exempted from serving on a jury like judges and policemen, were to take their turn, people would not need to be called more than once in ten years. Jury service would then be on a modern basis, and be fair for everyone.—A. D. CORRICK, Bournemouth, Hampshire.

Take It Easy

Goods sent by parcel post and marked "fragile" or "glass—with care" get no gentler handling, I am told, than other parcels. All are dropped into mail bags and are dumped around until reaching their destination.

Surely the Post Office could use different coloured bags for these parcels when they are specially labelled, and charge a little extra.—Miss M. E., Dunoon, Argyll.

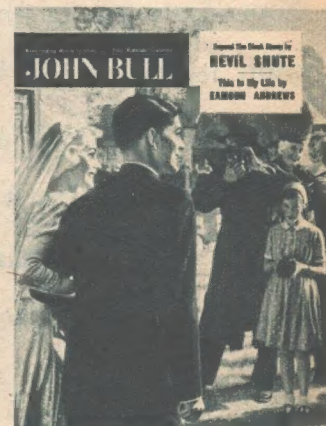
"Staff handling parcels clearly marked 'fragile' are expected to treat them with particular care, and this is done as far as is practicable," says the Post Office. "But the real answer is for people to pack their parcels well—with soft packing inside and strong outer covering."

"We have been considering separate bags, but this system would be difficult to arrange because 'fragile' parcels are so few and far between."

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

SMILES for the photographers, then there's just the confetti to be faced and the ordeal's over. Now it really does seem like the happiest day of their lives. It's not only the pomp and ceremony that prove it, but the down-to-earth details. The battered box camera that's recorded all the family's great days, the unfamiliar relatives who appear as harbingers of happiness on occasions like this, and mothers, fluttering as ever among the details. Cover artist Petts can sit back and relax now — and enjoy a match-maker's share of the champagne.



TONIGHT



TONIGHT *you must sleep like a child*

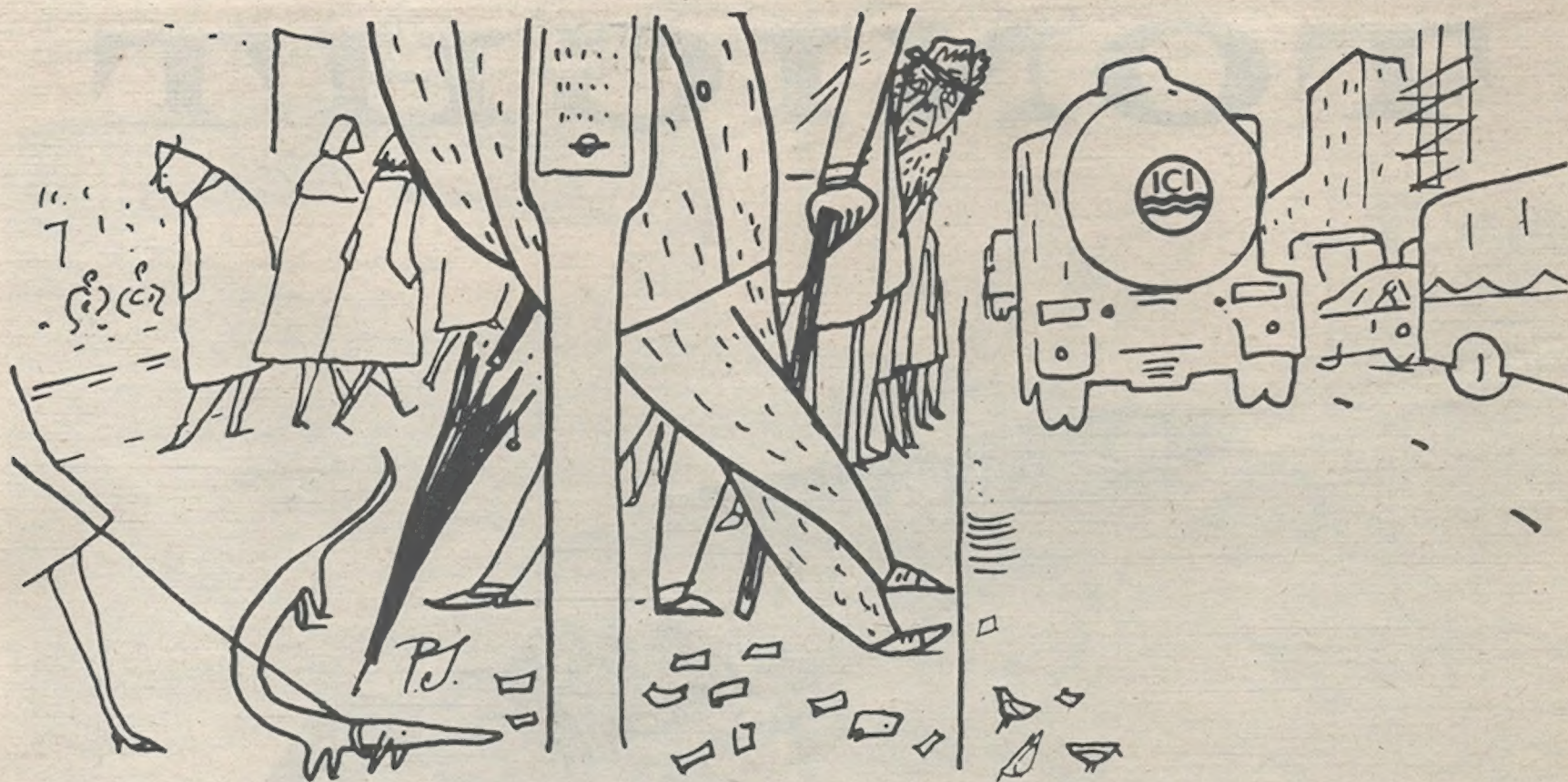
TONIGHT you must put your mind to rest when you put your body to sleep—tonight, Horlicks for you.

TONIGHT you must sleep warmer. Deep sleep is warm sleep, but shallow sleep is cold sleep—tonight, Horlicks for you.

TONIGHT you must sleep deeper, building tomorrow's energy reserves—tonight, Horlicks for you.

TONIGHT you must sleep like a child. When you were a child, you slept like a child. Your mind was asleep as well. Tonight, with Horlicks, you can sleep as soundly again. *Avoid* the shallow, restless sleep that starves the body. Tonight, Horlicks for you.

HORLICKS FOR YOU



the things they say!



I might have begged a lift of that tanker driver.

Why should he stop for you?

Well, I took the plunge some time ago, and bought some I.C.I. stock.

I.C.I.? Rubbing shoulders with the big brass, aren't you?

Not a bit of it. Most of the stockholders in I.C.I. are small investors like me.

That's hard to believe.

I used to think the same — until I checked the facts. The truth is, 85% of the stockholders hold, on the average, less than four hundred £1 units of stock each.

But the rest hold a nice little packet, I'll bet!

Wrong again. There are surprisingly few large holdings and most of those belong to life insurance companies, pension funds and investment trusts.

So the money is spread throughout a very wide circle, when you work it out.

Yes, but somebody must hold a controlling interest.

The business is too big for that to happen.

There are over 200,000 stockholders.

How are you so well up on your facts?

Well, my own son works for them, you know. There's another thing — he's a stockholder himself now.

With the new profit-sharing scheme in full swing, more than 80,000 employees like him now have their own stake in the company.



A detailed illustration of a man and a woman. The man, Pete Oakley, is in the upper left, looking down with a serious expression, his hand on his head. The woman, Susan, is in the lower right, looking up at him with a slight smile. She has blonde hair and is wearing a green top with orange beads. The background is a light blue gradient.

First day at Fairley

by ALAN WYKES

ILLUSTRATED BY DOUGLAS HILLS

Pete was letting Susan down badly. He was hours late—and bewitched by a new neighbour

ON the day of the Oakleys' move to Fairley Court, Pete Oakley caught the 7.25 from Charing Cross. His usual train home was the 6.5, but there had been snags at the office. Fife had wanted to see him about the Wylie Glass account and Fife had clearly been having a difficult day with Wylies' sales director. He had unburdened himself of those difficulties at some length.

Pete watched and listened and talked and tried not to show his weariness at the thought of the 6.5 and the 6.30 and the 6.57 and the 7.10 all going without him. But he had showed it—the deepening of the single furrow between his eyes and the involuntary aggressive thrust of his chin—and Fife had spoken about it.

"I know you're peeved, Pete, and I know you wanted to get off at three because you're moving into a new flat today," Fife had said. "But for heaven's sake snap out of it! Advertising's not a game you can rely on regular hours in. I remember having exactly the same trouble with Liz that you're anticipating from Susan. She used to say—"

Pete listened to Liz saying, in the voice of

"Now you must come in and have a drink," said the girl



her husband, that she couldn't think why in the world she hadn't married someone with civil service hours. He'd heard it before and all he could think of was that this was going to make him later than ever.

The clock moved silently on. The layout people brought in the proposed Wylie Glass campaign, but in an hour's discussion they hadn't even begun to iron out the difficulties in the way of promoting Wylie Glass.

It was a meeting which ended in failure because of an undercurrent of personal antagonisms; and because Fife was being pompous.

When they finally broke up, nothing had been settled except the time of the next day's conference.

"Nine," Fife said. "And for God's sake realize I don't mean nine-thirty. . . ."

It had been a grey day, and it was a grey evening. The misty dusk of deepening winter toned the leaden sky. Charing Cross Station was cold and dismal.

The 7.25 was late, and packed to suffocation. It was as if a great exodus had been postponed to this very moment—a last gesture of a fate determined to burden Pete Oakley's day with vexation.

The journey seemed interminable, but it ended at last. The train reached Fairley and Pete emerged from the station, turning automatically to the left. He walked nearly to the bottom of

In the entrance hall stood Susan and the children.
"Dad," said Hamish with pride, "I had a naccident"

the approach before remembering that tonight he should have turned the other way.

He thought reproachfully: *If you can't even remember you've got a new home to go to, you probably don't deserve to have one.*

Well, the work had crowded in upon him and diverted his attention from Susan and the youngsters and the new flat. But if there wasn't any work there wouldn't be any new home. That was a good enough argument, wasn't it?

He heard himself offering it, imagined the scene, his voice edgy with righteous indignation, Susan's normally pretty mouth petulant with weariness, the kids unsettled by disorganization. He began to feel very depressed.

When he reached Fairley Court, his immediate reaction was to wish he was arriving at the gate of 15 Caroline Terrace. Their so-called flat in the Georgian house there had had every imaginable inconvenience, but there had been a dusty magnificence in the curve of the terrace and a unique quality about the evening light that filtered through the beech trees on to the peeling stucco. Also, it had been home for eight years.

Pete Oakley, thirty-six, married, two children, copywriter with a future—if he struggled for it—looked up on this first evening at the new home, the first real home he had acquired. He looked up with distaste at the six-storey block with its sun-trap windows and stark outlines. *Hell!* he thought. *How can you make a home in a rabbit warren like that?*

The lift was self-operating and had stuck somewhere above with the gates open. He walked up ten flights of stairs to the fifth floor and leaned against the handrail with a conscious effort at composure. He'd better calm down a bit before going in, if there wasn't to be a scene. The best thing would be to apologize, and begin helping right away to straighten up what would undoubtedly be moving-day chaos.

Then as he rested there, he heard on the floor above a feminine voice crooning enticingly at some elusive animal.

"Smyrna," the voice coaxed, "come along, beautiful. Smyrna, Smyrna, Smyrna."

Pete's eyebrows straightened in an expression of distaste. *Ridiculous name! Ridiculous woman! At the end of a day like this, he thought, I'm fated to hear a woman like that.*

Well, he'd go in now, face whatever had to be faced. . . .

He felt in his pocket for his key; but at the end of a day like this it was of course the key to 15 Caroline Terrace that he found there, the key that he'd picked up every morning for eight years and had forgotten this morning of all mornings to leave for Susan to hand over to the new tenant. He searched all his pockets, but couldn't find the other one.

He pressed the bell. Its strident ringing would naturally awaken the kids, if by any remote chance Susan had got them to bed. That would mean another reproach to be coped with.

But there was no answer.

Pete pressed hard at the bell-push once more, but this time he was just giving vent to his irritation. *This is the last straw*, he thought. He breathed out through his nose, hard.

Then a disquieting thought came to him. Had something happened to Susan or the children?

He pushed back the spring flap of the letter-box and peered through. All was dark inside. But he had a pen-torch in his pocket and with the faint light from this he saw that there was furniture in the lobby, and piles of his books; the kids' old playpen, the brown rug with the fringe, the nest of tables in diminishing sizes.

Evidently the move had been accomplished. But what had happened to the family?

He realized suddenly that the answer would be written on a note inside. Susan would have been bound to see to that. And it might be an answer needing his urgent attention.

He had a momentary crazy urge to batter the door down, but of course such violence wasn't

necessary. There was the caretaker up on the top floor. He'd have spare keys.

Pete went up the stairs three at a time, feeling vaguely afraid. He was afraid of the unknown, of what might be written on the note. He'd got to get at that note quickly.

He went dashing up, his coat flapping open, a strand of brown hair awry over his right ear. And on the next landing he met the girl.

She was a girl with grey eyes and ash-blonde hair brushed smoothly over the crown of her head from a parting low on the right side. She was about twenty-eight and she was trying, she said, to capture her cat.

"Oh!" Pete said. "Yes, I believe I heard you. Smyrna or something?"

"Not something: Smyrna. She's a Smyrinese cat. There—sitting on the fanlight."

PETE looked up. The fanlight above the door of the girl's flat was open. A cat with smoky-blue mask and legs and almond-shaped sapphire blue eyes sat on the ledge leaning with elegant nonchalance against the glass.

"Oh, a Siamese cat!" Pete said. "I thought you said Smyrinese or something."

"I did," the girl said firmly. "The little boy belonging to the people who gave it to me called it a Smyrinese cat. To me, she has remained a Smyrinese ever since."

"Oh, I see," he said; and smiled in appreciation of her respect for the child's coined word. "Yes: naturally you'd have to hold on to that word."

"Naturally. Could you reach up and get her for me, please? She got out this morning before I left for work. She's been running round the block all day, and she still insists on playing this ridiculous catch-as-catch-can game."

"Well, I—"

"Oh, she'll come to you all right. She's been leading me this dance because the liver I bought her yesterday was pig's instead of calf's. If I go in and shut the door you have only to make enticing noises and she'll walk into your arms. Then I'll open the door."

Pete thought in sudden panic of the empty flat below. "If you'd excuse me—"

"Heavens, you're not an ailurophobe, are you?"

"A what?"

"Cat-hater. Like Lord Roberts was."

"Oh no! Cats are all right. But—"

"Then it'll only take a second. I know Smyrna well."

Pete groaned inwardly. He said: "Then she's probably overheard this little intrigue and planned to defeat it."

"No. She's hungry enough to be willing to be captured now—but only as the result of a trick. That way she won't suffer any ignominy."

With that the girl went in, smiled over her shoulder and shut the door. The cat gazed down and gave a perceptible sniff.

Pete walked to the door, held up his arms and said: "Puss, puss, puss." After a suitable interval for consideration, the cat walked down his arm and on to his shoulder. Pete tucked her under one arm and pressed the bell-push. The girl opened the door. The cat gave a yowl of dismay at being thus trickily captured.

"You see?"

"Yes, I see," Pete said. "Well, it was a pleasure." Within the flat Smyrna gave vent to her lamentations of betrayal.

The girl smiled. She said: "Well, now you must come in and have a drink and we must introduce ourselves. Otherwise there'll be an awful hiatus every time we meet."

"No," Pete said. He was conscious of making his voice very firm. "I couldn't do that. I have to find the caretaker, I've lost my key, and my wife and children haven't arrived. I must go this minute."

The girl seemed to take this in with remarkable speed considering it must have been largely



To Pete they looked alone and so terribly vulnerable. The colour drained from his face: he felt himself sway a little

From Royal Ascot to the raucous tipsters thronging Epsom on Derby Day, racing is as British as beer. But the great sport is in danger.... by W. E. ARMSTRONG

Crisis on the Turf



THE "off" for racing under Jockey Club rules was given when the first meeting opened traditionally at Lincoln last week. And with it, to the millions for whom racing is a pleasure, pastime or profession, the advent of what is truly a summer sport must have been a promise of spring.

But in more senses than one, the brutal winter has been one of discontent for racing people.

From powerful owner-breeders like the Aga Khan, from former Jockey Club stewards such as Lord Rosebery and the Duke of Norfolk, from big trainers and small, from the modest punter in the cheapest ring, the same opinion, but with a difference of emphasis, is forthcoming: the sport, after the boom years just after the war, is facing the most intractable crisis in its history.

Yet, when the gate went up for the first race at Lincoln there had never been more horses in training, more owners registered, more people employed and potentially more money involved in racing under Jockey Club rules. For what is authoritatively said to be a declining industry, racing shows signs of extraordinary vitality.

Are such signs to be trusted? What are the reasons for alarm, and how well are they founded? How is racing, so popular for so long as to be deemed an integral part of national life, run and organized? If it is indeed still the best of its kind, what should be done to ensure that that standard is maintained?

"If once we efface the joys of the chase from our land and abolish the stud,

Goodbye to the Anglo-Saxon race, farewell to the Norman blood!"

So ran Adam Lindsay Gordon's jingle, written nearly a hundred years ago. Gordon—poet, jockey and horse lover—was concerned for the well-being of the Turf. Racing in England, he said, was headed for ruin. Its quality had declined; its administration was inept; its finances unsound. Its inevitable disappearance would be nothing less than a national tragedy.

Racing in this country is as indigenous as the primrose, or beer. There is scarcely a day in the year, except Sundays, when horses are not competing somewhere for money prizes. But because of the haphazard, accidental nature of its development, British racing is uncomfortable, complicated and conservative. Courses, of which there are forty-five under Jockey Club rules, are often inaccessible and differ startlingly in lay-out. Amenities are poor and meetings often of very short duration.

Betting, without which racing would die, has been bedevilled by hypocritical laws letting a punter bet hundreds of pounds by telephone and hauling into the courts the man who gave a shilling wager to the milkman. In America, courses are centralized near the big cities, conform to one type of shape and surface, and run meetings which last for weeks in the streamlined atmosphere of a holiday camp. In France, all important meetings—except that at Deauville—are held near Paris, look like garden parties and

The Queen Mother at Ascot with the Duke of Norfolk, who has warned that the high cost of racing is leading to a fall in course receipts



Girls are replacing boys drawn from stables by high wages. At Newmarket, June Davis exercises the Queen's horse Spanish Court



Jock Halsey, of Newmarket, with the two-year-old Bernice. At thirty-four he is one of the youngest trainers in the country. "The going is hard for all of us," he says. "But I can't think of any job that I would rather do"

can be reached by the public painlessly. In both these countries the horses can actually be seen in contest.

Nevertheless, British racing is still, in spite of everything, the best in the world. And while few today believe that the British character would be irreparably damaged if racing were to be forbidden tomorrow, Lindsay Gordon's fears for its future have been repeated at intervals ever since he expressed them, and never with greater urgency than during the last few seasons.

Racing is an entertainment, a spectacle, and as such depends on public support. The evidence strongly suggests that unless racing puts its house in order by a financial overhaul it will progressively fail to compete with other forms of entertainment. The Duke of Norfolk, retiring senior steward of racing's central dictatorship, the Jockey Club, warned last year that the high cost of racing was leading to an appreciable fall in racecourse receipts.

The solution, he suggested, could lie in three measures: attracting more people through the turnstiles by making lower admittance charges and offering better amenities to the racegoer; lowering the heavy taxation on the totalizator receipts; and ploughing back some of the public's betting money into the executives' funds. The Duke quoted figures. These showed that of every pound earned by the executives of the forty-five racecourses under the rules only one shilling remained after entertainment duty, prize money, operating costs and local and national taxation had been paid.

WITH such a sum at their disposal, racecourses cannot hope to raise prize money, and unless prize money is raised the indispensable unit which keeps racing alive will be forced out of the business. That unit is the owner.

At a meeting of the Racehorse Owners' Association held in London six months ago a member indignantly remarked that horse racing in Britain was the only sport known to him where people who provide the means of entertainment pay for the privilege of doing so. The statistics bear him out. In any given year since the war an average of about five thousand horses competed in 2,300 races for a total value in prize money of something over a million pounds. As it costs an owner between £600 and £700 a year to keep a horse in training—and a bad horse eats as much as a champion—it follows that owners

spend £3 million to win a possible £1 million.

At any race meeting owners provide almost forty per cent of the prize money, which only a very few can share. In France, where bookmakers are illegal and a high percentage of the Tote's returns come back to the racecourse to swell the prizes, the owners' contribution is only about six per cent. A single example, one of hundreds, can make the point. At Nottingham last year the Queen's horse, Maple Leaf, won a race of £300. The second received £60; the third £30; the Queen's share was £207—£3 entrance money was deducted from the stakes. Of the total money awarded for the race, all but £17 was provided by the owners in entry and acceptance fees.

It is not surprising, then, that big owners like

the Aga Khan have moved their English stables over the Channel. Even a very rich man can refuse to race his horses for what is largely his own money when he can start them for higher prizes paid for by racecourses through public betting money in France.

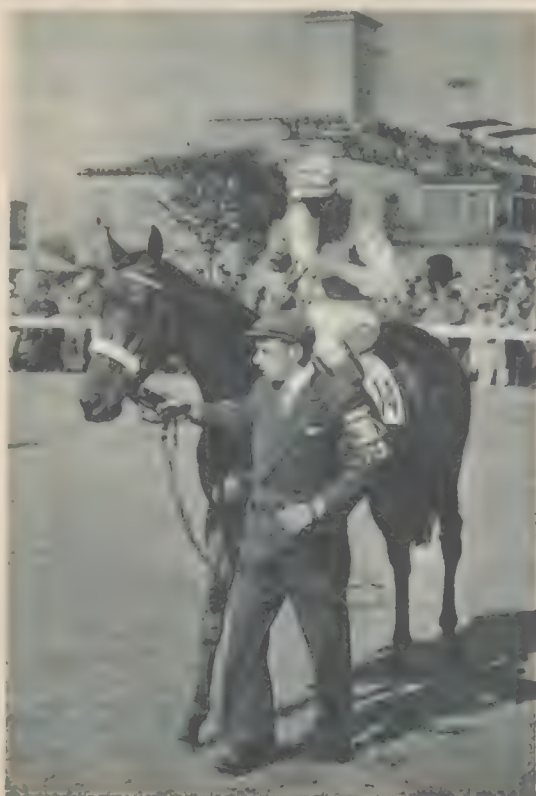
IN the happy days of British racing, when taxation by today's standards did not exist and death duties were unknown, historic families like the Portlands, the Westminsters and the Abingdons, and bankers and business men like the Rothschilds and Joels, could breed and race their horses as a pleasant but rarely rewarding hobby. Great horses were bred and, what is as important, were kept in training till they were five or six years old, after which they stayed in stud in this country to assure the continuity of the blood lines which gave the British thoroughbred the prestige he still retains, but which he is now in danger of losing.

Today the munificent owner-breeder has almost vanished. Nor is it possible to keep a highly successful horse in training after his third year. The stigma of defeat as a four-year-old, leading to an inevitable drop in the value of stud fees, is not a risk which even the wealthiest owner can take.

In 1952 the Aga Khan's colt Tulyar won the Derby, the St. Leger, the Eclipse and the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes, and was generally thought to be one of the greatest colts of the last fifty years and certainly the finest of his age anywhere. To the great pleasure of the public his owner announced that Tulyar would be kept in training to race as a four-year-old against the best which Europe could produce. But the Aga Khan changed his mind and early in 1953 Tulyar was sold to the Irish Government for £250,000. He went to stud and never raced again.

Tulyar, standing in Ireland, remained over here, but three of the same owner's earlier Derby winners—Blenheim, Bahram and Mahmoud—all went to America, and with them three potentially great stallions were lost to Britain. Gay Time, beaten by Tulyar in the Derby, was sold to the National Stud for £50,000, which illustrates what defeat by a yard can mean in terms of money. Nimbus, the 1949 Derby winner, was syndicated at stud for £140,000, and never ran as a four-year-old. Compared with

Continued on page 49



Meld at Doncaster, where she won the St. Leger in 1955. In that season she won £42,562 for Lady Zia Wernher

Beyond The Black Stump

by NEVIL SHUTE

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

Molly was fascinated by the American. . . . And so David Cope had to take a painful chance



OIL-PROSPECTING took geologist Stanton Laird into some remote corners of the world, but rarely to a more rugged spot than the Lunatic Range, West Australia. Rarely, too, did he meet a girl as pretty as Molly Regan. . . .

Molly lived at Laragh sheep-station. Stanton and his crew chose to camp midway between Laragh and another sheep-station, Lucinda. Lucinda was a poor, drought-stricken place run by a young Englishman named David Cope.

Prosperous Laragh was run by two Irish brothers, Tom and Pat Regan. But the homestead itself was firmly under the thumb of Pat's wife, Mrs. Regan. She and Molly were the only white women for miles around. A scholarly old reprobate known as the Judge also lived at Laragh.

Stanton Laird was very attracted by Molly. A serious-minded young man, absorbed in his work, he had had little to do with girls since a drunken escapade in his youth which ended in a tragic car smash.

He came from a small American town named Hazel—a wonderful place to live, in his view. And he had a chance to return there if he wanted, a chance to quit the oil business: for his father was offering him a job. He must decide in a few months whether to accept.

Stanton's mind was far from this problem at present, though. Guided by one of his firm's Australian employees, Donald Bruce, he was searching for a site for the oil-rig.

They came within sight of Lucinda's boundary-wire. "He seems a nice sort of a young fellow," Stanton said, thinking of David Cope, its owner. "I met him last night at Mannahill Station."

"That's the one," Donald Bruce said, "He's got his eye on Molly. . . ."

PART TWO

A Portrait Of Molly Regan

STANTON drove the truck carefully across country, threading his way around the occasional boulders and around the thickest clumps of spinifex. Presently the Australian directed him down from a spur towards a piece of flat country seamed by a dry river-bed. "I'd say a camp down there would be as good as anywhere."

Stanton stopped the truck and sat motionless at the wheel, looking at the country ahead; the two trucks following him stopped also. Presently they all got out and stood looking over the barren landscape. There were a few sheep in the valley, but no other sign of life.

"I guess this is it," said Stanton. "This is what we've come for."

A week later Mr. Bruce left the seismic crew to return to Melbourne. Stanton drove him to Malvern Downs. There, Stanton met reinforcements. An American from Texas, Spencer Rasmussen, had come up to take over the management of the camp.

His arrival took a great load of organization off the geologist. For the first time Stanton was able to get down to work upon the drawing board in the tent they had set up as an office, poring over the ground observations of the previous party reinforced by his own observations. Frequently he would take the jeep and drive two or three miles to some spur of the hills, and spend an hour or two with plane table and theodolite. Very soon these expeditions took him close to the Lucinda fence.

He took time off one afternoon, and went out in the jeep to pay a call on David Cope. He had arranged the visit beforehand over the radio-telephone, and David was waiting at the homestead when the jeep drove up.

Lucinda homestead was a little place of five

Stanton read the letter with surprise. "Do you know who wrote this?" he asked



To make a pathway for their trucks, the oilmen had to cut through the fence. As they were doing so, a half-caste rode up

rooms only. The structure was of wood supporting a covering of white asbestos sheets. There was no veranda, a considerable deprivation in that climate for the house was small and very hot.

David greeted the American warmly. "Come on in," he said. "The house isn't much—not like Mannahill or Laragh, I'm afraid."

Stanton said, "It's a palace to me, Mr. Cope. We're living in tents."

"David's the name, Stan. It's what they do in this country. They're bloody touchy about names."

"I know it."

"I expect your tents are a damn sight more comfortable than this house. But do come in. I've got a kettle on the stove for tea, and I got my cook to make some cakes. I don't know what they'll be like." They went into the house. "The folk at Laragh haven't broken you in to rum yet?"

The geologist laughed. "Not yet," he said. "Say, do they always drink it that way in this country?"

"They seem to in the outback. It's the climate or something. It doesn't seem to hurt them, like it would you or me. The Regans are good graziers, you know."

The sitting-room, so called, that the front door

opened into, was very sparsely furnished. A deck chair, a steamer chair, and a table, all rather soiled and old, made up the only furniture.

"I'm afraid it's not much to look at," David said apologetically. "I got this place walk-in, walk-out, and this is the only furniture that was in it when I came. I did up the bedroom that I use, but I haven't been able to get around to the rest of the house yet."

THE bedroom door was open, and Stanton glanced in. It was a clean, decent room to look at, unlike the rest of the house.

David saw the glance and led the way into the bedroom.

The American said: "You've got it mighty nice."

He glanced around the room. Three framed photographs stood upon the chest of drawers. Two were of elderly people, almost certainly the father and mother. The third one, very simple and rather appealing, was a portrait of Molly Regan.

David led the way back through the sitting-room into the kitchen and made tea in a chipped enamel teapot.

"I'm afraid it's all a bit rough," he said. "It's coming good, though. You come along in

six months' time and you won't know the place."

"Sure," said Stanton. "There must be a lot to do when you take on a place like this."

David sipped the hot tea. "Well, of course—there is. I'm at it all the time, from dawn to dusk. It's a bad property, of course," he said candidly. "If it was a good one I wouldn't be here running it, at my age. Three hundred and twenty thousand acres, but very little water. There's over a hundred thousand acres up your end that we can't use at all."

The geologist blinked at the figure. "Can't use it?"

David nodded. "There's not even a puddle on it."

Stanton said: "Maybe you won't be so mad at what I'm going to ask, then. The strata on the Laragh side are falling to the west, so far as I can see, and now I'm working close up to your fence. The Department haven't asked for us to prospect on your property, have they?"

David shook his head. "I haven't seen anything. You're quite welcome, though. We've got no sheep there because there's not a drop of water for them and most of it I've never seen myself. If you go on it I'll be glad to know what's there."

"That's mighty nice of you," said the

geologist. "I'll certainly tell you everything we find." He paused in thought. "It could be that we might know something about the water prospect in this district by the time we're through."

"I wanted to ask you about that," David said. "You do prospect for water, as well as oil?"

"Uh-huh," said Stanton. "It's one and the same thing. There are porous kinds of rock strata and impervious kinds of rock strata, just those two. Water or oil or Coca-Cola—they'll soak down into the porous strata and get trapped by the impervious strata. Once I get the undersurface picture of this whole locality set down on paper, then maybe I'll know where water might lie or where oil might lie. Till then I'd just be guessing."

"I'd be very grateful for anything that you can tell me about the chance of water on Lucinda."

They chatted for a quarter of an hour and then the geologist got to his feet. "Time I was getting back to work," he said. "The boys'll be wondering what happened to me."

They went out to his jeep. "Come over to our camp some time, David, 'n' take a look around. We got nothing much to offer you except ice-cream. Miss Regan said that she'd be over to have some of that, but she hasn't shown up yet."

"I'd like to do that, Stan," the boy said.

"Certainly." The geologist stood by the jeep, looking around. "You got a mighty lot of country to pick from," he said. "There should be water here some place."

David grinned. "We could use it."

"Let's keep our fingers crossed," said the geologist.

He drove back following the track that led to Laragh. As he drove a kangaroo got up and bounded away. He stopped the jeep and watched it as it ran away over a low rise; it checked in its bounding run and swerved to the right, and then went bounding on till it was lost to sight. He wondered what it was that had made it swerve like that. It looked as if the spinifex there was a different colour, sort of dead looking.

He was in no hurry. He stopped the engine and got out of the jeep, and walked in the direction taken by the kangaroo. He walked about a quarter of a mile, and a faint odour in the air assailed him, a very familiar smell.

On the crest of a small rise he found what he was looking for. There was an area of ground, only about ten yards square, an outcrop of sandstone with a little granitic conglomerate. There was a fissure in the rock, and a smell of natural gas.

He bent to the fissure, sniffed it carefully, and tried to light it with a match, but it would not burn. He stood up thoughtfully, and looked around. It was within the cemetery area; the fence ran two hundred yards to the north.

There was nothing with which he could mark the place, and he had no instruments with him. He studied the fence line carefully, and walked towards it at right angles, counting his paces; when he got there he tied his handkerchief in a firm knot on the wire. Then he made his way back to the jeep and drove on to his camp.

THERE was a strange jeep drawn up by the tents, and as he drove up he saw the bright colours of women's print frocks. He realized that Mrs. Regan and Molly had driven over to visit with them, and he quickened his pace. He drove in and got out of the jeep and went to meet them.

"I'm real sorry I wasn't here when you came," he said. "I picked this afternoon of all afternoons to go visiting at Lucinda."

"Don't fash yerself, Mr. Laird," said Mrs. Regan. "The boys have been looking after us and giving us ice-cream."

"I invited them to stay for supper, Stan," said Spencer Rasmussen.

Stanton turned to Molly's mother. "Would

you be able to stay 'n' have supper with us, Mrs. Regan? The boys would like it if you could."

"We'd be pleased to, Mr. Laird. We'll have to be back by eight o'clock, though, or they'll be sending out a search party."

Spencer Rasmussen glanced at his watch. "The six o'clock schedule will be on in half an hour," he said. "We can speak to them on the natter session after that." He meant on the radio.

Molly turned to Stanton and said: "What did you think of Lucinda, Stan?"

"It's kind of small," he said. "I guess he'll get it pretty nice, though, by the time he's through. He's certainly a worker."

She nodded. "I know. It's such an awful pity that he hasn't got a better property to work on. There's hardly any water there at all."

MRS. REGAN had gone off with Ted to the cook tent, where he was showing her his stainless steel kerosene pressure cooking stove, his cadmium-coated aluminium freezer, and his water softener and cooler, with great pride.

Stanton piloted Molly to follow them thinking that she would take an interest in these things, and this gave him an opportunity to say a few words aside to Spencer Rasmussen.

"You know what?" he inquired. "There's a gas seepage, a little one, in the cemetery."

"There is?"

"I'll show you in the morning."

"It wouldn't be a decomposing body?"

"I don't reckon it's that. I know gas when I smell it."

He joined the ladies at the cook tent. They were amazed at the fine quality of the equipment with which Ted worked.

"There isn't a thing hardly that's not stainless steel or aluminium," Mrs. Regan said in wonder. "It must all have cost a fortune."

The Americans were slightly embarrassed. "Don't you have stainless steel things in your kitchen, ma'am?" asked Stanton.

"Oh, yes, we do. But not so much as this, or such good quality." She picked up a stainless saucepan. "It's got a ground bottom and all, but it's so light."

Stanton asked Ted: "What do we get for supper tonight?"

"Fried chicken, sausages, and hot cakes, boss. I got some biscuits in the oven. Fruit salad 'n' ice-cream. Coffee."

"I guess that'll do." He turned to Molly, smiling. "Sounds like a real American meal," he said. "I hope you'll be able to eat it."

"It sounds delicious."

He took them round the camp, into his own sleeping tent first. Again they were naïvely astonished at the comforts with which the Americans had equipped their camp, which seemed so natural to them.

Mrs. Regan said, "I never saw a camp fitted up like this before."

Finally he took his guests into the mess tent next door, a marquee with a long table down the middle, a couple of deck chairs, and a side table with a litter of magazines on it. Presently one of the oilmen shouted that Laragh was on the air.

Stanton took Mrs. Regan back to the set leaving Molly in the mess tent, thinking that the older woman might need help in operating a radio-telephone. He need not have worried; the set was as normal to Mrs. Regan as her kitchen stove.

She spoke for a few minutes to the Judge, telling him where they were and giving him instructions about supper. Then they went back to the marquee.

They found Molly engrossed in the advertisement pages of the *Saturday Evening Post*. She looked up as they came in, but did not put the magazine down.

"You do have lovely things in America," she said. "Tell me, are these pictures real?"

"Real?"

"Do you really have cars like that?" She



The question, put so casually at this

pointed to the long, flowing lines of a big convertible in a glamorous setting."

"I guess so," he said.

She studied the picture for a moment or so longer, and then leafed the pages through slowly. The advertisements were positively dazzling to her.

"You do have the most lovely magazines," she said.

He was a little surprised at the note of yearning in her voice, because these things were normal to him.

"Would you like to borrow some of them?" he asked.

She withdrew a little. "Oh no!" she said. "I



moment, astonished her. "If that's a joke, David, it's a pretty poor one," she said

couldn't! You've got nothing else to read."

"I think the boys have read most of these," he said. "There's a fresh batch comes in each week with the mail."

She could not avoid their generosity. The Americans made up a bundle of about a dozen magazines for her and put them in the Laragh jeep, and her thanks were more evident in her gleaming eyes, her raised colour and her slight excitement, than in her words. Stanton, pleased himself at her pleasure, became aware that he was talking to a very lovely girl, a lovelier girl than he had seen in Hazel during his vacation.

After supper the Regans started off for home, Molly driving the jeep. It was a fine night with

a rising moon, and the track, though faint, was clearly visible in the silvery light.

Mrs. Regan and Molly protested that they were perfectly capable of driving back to Laragh by themselves, as indeed they were, but the Americans would not hear of it. Spencer Rasmussen and Stanton got into their jeep to follow the ladies.

They drove behind them till the shearers' camp of Laragh came in sight; then they pulled up alongside, waved and shouted goodnight, and wheeled around to drive back to their camp on the oil site.

Molly Regan went to bed with an armful of American magazines and with a lot to think

about. A whole new world was opening before her.

She had never in her life been outside West Australia, had never been farther from her station home than Perth. As regards America, her opinion was formed entirely on the films and the film magazines. She had never spoken to anybody in her life who had visited America. The picture of America that had been placed before her was that of a country uninterested in simple pleasures and devoid of simple virtues, brash, over-luxurious, dissolute, ignorant, uncultured, and hag-ridden by gangsters.

She had accepted this picture of American life without question; now she was having to revise it. She had found these Americans, mostly men in their late twenties or early thirties, to be simple and unaffected people. All were generous to a degree that she had seldom met before, and it had not escaped her wondering notice that the only book in Stanton Laird's tent had been a Bible.

She did not understand their work, but it was quite clear that they were highly educated people and very competent in the outback, strange though it was to them.

Physically they were very like the people that she was accustomed to see on the movies, and they had the same sort of names, but in behaviour they seemed totally different, and a great deal nicer. Especially their leader, Stanton Laird. . . .

David Cope, coming to Laragh to meet Spinfex Joe next mail day, found the veranda littered with American magazines, and Molly deeply engrossed in them. "The things they have!" she said.

He picked up one of the magazines and leafed it through, a little enviously.

"I believe we've got most of these things," he said. "Not the big cars or the television, of course, but most of the rest. But they do advertise them well, don't they?"

She said, "I think they're beaut."

Presently the mail was sorted, and it was time for him to get back to Lucinda. "What about the movies?" he inquired. "Mannahill on Saturday?"

"Some of the Americans are going," she said. "They're coming here at about four o'clock to pick us up. You'd better join up with us here, David, and we'll all go on together."

He hesitated for a moment. "All right."

BACK at the oil site the Americans were now paying a great deal of attention to the land around the gas seepage which Stanton had found in the cemetery.

"We'll run a line of shot holes right across 'n' take some seismic readings," Stanton said. "The only thing is, I don't know that we've got the right to go in there."

"Hell," said Spencer Rasmussen, "who's to stop us?"

"It doesn't belong to Laragh Station now. It belongs to the shire."

"All the better. They don't take no interest in it."

"I guess we'd better get permission from the Shire Office."

The Shire Office was in a little town called Uantaringa about a hundred and seventy miles to the north of them. Spencer Rasmussen grumbled a good deal, but drove over one day in the jeep, arriving after eight hours' hard driving.

The Shire Clerk, he found, was also the store-keeper, postman, and registrar of births, deaths, and marriages.

Spencer Rasmussen explained his business.

"Aw," said the Shire Clerk, "do what you like."

Spencer Rasmussen got into his jeep and drove a hundred and seventy miles back in a fury.

Next day the Americans moved up towards the cemetery and commenced to drill a line of six shot holes in a position laid down to a yard



Muir and the girl—an illustration by Zelinski

Two brilliant short stories

GREAT DAY

IT WAS the day that Muir had lived for through the violent years—spellbound by the memory of a lovely girl. . . . A moving story by KEITH WILSON

A FORTUNE FOR LOVERS

GIAN HAD staked everything on a dream—his job, his reputation, his sweetheart. Only a madman would do it. . . . A light-hearted story by GEORGE JOSEPH

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

by Stanton Laird, the last two of which were within the cemetery area. To run their big trucks in they removed a section of the barbed wire fence.

While they were doing this a half-caste on a horse appeared out of the blue, herding half a dozen sheep before him on some obscure mustering errand.

He waved to them and reined in, smiling broadly, exchanged a few words, and accepted a cigarette.

The half-caste stayed with them for an hour, watching the drilling in progress, and then remounted, gathered his sheep together from their grazing in the cemetery, and made off over the horizon with his little flock, singing as he rode.

At Laragh Station that evening, in the forum of the station store, sitting on the floor or on the boxes and drinking rum out of enamelled pannikins, the men discussed this latest development.

"Aren't they the queer fellows?" asked Pat Regan. "It's a strange thing that with all the length and breadth of Australia laid out before them, they must choose a cemetery to make their holes."

"It will bring them no luck," said Tom soberly. "No luck at all! No good ever came to men who desecrate a cemetery." There was a long silence while his words sank in. "Ye remember the strong point in Kilgorran cemetery made by the English—the curse of Cromwell on them?"

"I do so," said Pat. "We had them destroyed entirely. James Doherty crept up beneath the wall and threw in two grenades. There was only two of them not killed or wounded, and they lepping the walls like mountain goats till the rifles got them. No good ever came of desecrating a cemetery."

"Sure," said Tom, "only the Black and Tans or the Americans would think to do a thing like that."

The Judge stirred.

"How very right you are," he said quietly. "God's Acre has to be protected from unscrupulous and thoughtless men. I take it that the cemetery is clearly marked?"

"Wasn't there a fine board painted with the name, unless it's blown down or somebody has taken it to make a fire?" said Pat. "I painted it with these same hands, not more than eight years back."

"I saw it last summer. It was still there

then," said Tom. "And fine barbed wire, hardly rusty even, all around."

The Judge said gravely:

"Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture
deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh."

"That's a lovely piece of poetry," said Pat Regan. "Implores the passing tribute of a sigh." He reached out for the rum bottle, and poured about two inches into the Judge's pannikin. "The loveliest piece this side of the black stump."

The Judge took the rum and shot it down, following it with a pannikin of water. "It is a very dreadful thing that the cupidity of man should reach out to disturb the dead," he said. "The greed for money is a terrible obsession."

"It will bring no luck," said Tom. "It's destroyed that we'll all be."

It was several days before Spinifex Joe arrived to take the mail, and the Geraldton *Advocate* was published only once a week, so that it was nearly three weeks before the startled populace of Geraldton learned from the correspondence column what was going on within five hundred miles of them. Then they read:

Sir,

In these troubled times a voice raised in an endeavour to protect the simple decencies of Christian life may be, indeed, a voice crying in the wilderness. Yet I have confidence that when the readers of the *Advocate* learn of an act of desecration carried out in their vicinity they will rise up in their wrath and sweep away the wrongdoers.

In the Shire of Uantaringa, in a district seldom visited by newspaper correspondents, there is a cemetery. If judged by the number of burials, it is not large; indeed, in numbers it is even smaller than that most famous cemetery of all time, Stoke Poges, where Thomas Gray wrote his immortal *Elegy*. God's Acre, however, is not to be judged by numbers or by size; an act of desecration is unaltered by the numbers of the graves.

It is unfortunate that this small island of the Christian faith lies in the path of Topex Exploration Incorporated, an American company now carrying out explorations for mineral oil resources by arrangement with the government of West Australia. No doubt the Americans look upon these matters in a different way to those of us who are blessed by

membership of the British Commonwealth. Be that as it may, the fact remains that drilling operations to find oil are now going on within the precincts of the cemetery, to the undying shame of every citizen of West Australia. There are imponderable verities, the true foundations of our faith, more valuable than oil.

Can nothing be done to throw back the forces of cupidity and evil in their onward march?

I am, sir,

PRO BONO PUBLICO.

The letter was picked up by the Perth *Observer*, and the editor rang Mr. Colin Spriggs, the Topex manager in Perth. Mr. Spriggs knew that Stanton Laird and his crew had got permission to take seismic readings in a cemetery, but was under the impression that the cemetery was disused. He promised to get further details without delay.

Mr. Spriggs spoke to Stanton Laird that evening, faintly, by long distance telephone and Flying Doctor radio, then rang up the editor.

"Say, Bob," he said. "I've just been talking with our geologist, Stan Laird. I guess it's partly right about the cemetery, but it's a kind of funny story."

"What kind of funny story?"

"Say, do you know a part of the country that they call the Lunatic?"

The other laughed. "In the East Hamersleys?"

"That's right. This story comes from there, and I'd say it's about the only place it *could* come from."

When they met a quarter of an hour later over a drink in the Adelphi Hotel, the editor was inclined to agree with Mr. Spriggs. It seemed uncertain if the Uantaringa cemetery was consecrated ground or not and so he killed the story, but a gas seepage in a new district was news in an oil-starved Australia.

THE two newspaper men, a reporter and a photographer, came to the Lunatic from Perth in a Land-Rover. They reached Laragh Station about midday on their last leg to the Topex camp, and were invited to stay to dinner by Mrs. Regan and Molly. Pat and the half-caste boys were away out on the property, but Tom Regan was there, and the Judge appeared at the lunch table.

The newspaper men said nothing about the cemetery but made small talk about the weather, the chance of rain, and the ram sales. They found conversation with Tom Regan while he was pre-occupied with his dinner to be an uphill job, but the Judge was more forthcoming.

"I have sometimes found it in my heart to envy you gentlemen of the press," he said. "So great an influence is yours. And yet, I suppose that your responsibilities must weigh upon you very heavily at times."

Phil Patterson, the photographer, felt that some confirmatory interjection was required, and so he said, "Too right."

"Indeed, I am sure that it must be so. To lay down your pen and read again the words that you have written with such anxious care, changing a colon for a semi-colon here, a comma there—and then to reflect that the words which you have written will take the wings of Ariel and fly around the world, changing the lives perhaps of unseen people in Natal, of unknown people in Hongkong or Somerset. It must take great courage, sometimes, to put forth the message from your desk."

Tom Regan finished his pudding, got up from the table, muttered something unintelligible, and went out of the door. The others followed him.

The Judge bade a courtly goodbye to the reporters and went off to the store; for the moment the two newspaper men were left alone on the veranda.

"Well, anyway," muttered Duncan Mann to

Continued on page 32



Why is the water as hot as I want it?



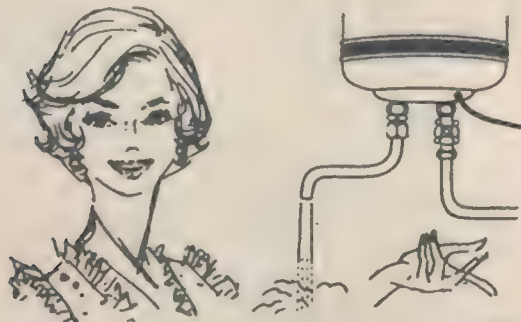
As hot as I want it at once?



Why can I say it is always that way?



And why am I saving expense?



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Electricity Service Centre

Issued by the Electrical Development Association



Mr. Tom's weeds grow to fame

*Nine years ago people laughed at Tom Rochford. Now he leads
Britain's £75,000 indoor plant industry* by RENÉ LECLER

ONE spring morning a few years ago Tom Rochford spent a long time in one of his greenhouses at Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, studying four hundred plants. They were the last of his *Peperomia Sandersii*, a short-stemmed, broad-leaved specimen of indoor plant. There were orders for several thousand, but he could get no more supplies from Scandinavia.

After a while Rochford hit on the idea of reproducing them in an unorthodox way. He told the nurseryman to start quartering the little leaves down the veins, and to strike them in soil just as they were, without stalks.

For five weeks Rochford arrived at eight o'clock each morning to inspect the tiny bits of leaves, stuck squarely in their trays, and to pull one out in the hope of finding roots. Finally his patience was rewarded and the first leaves he picked had developed tiny strands of roots. From those forlorn four hundred Rochford grew

14,000 plants, and when foreign growers offered him new *Peperomia* six months later he was able to cable back, "Thanks, I have got my own."

Fifty-one year old Tom Rochford is the enterprising head of an old-established family firm of nurserymen who was in at the start of the indoor plant boom that is now sweeping the country. In 1955, less than eight years after the start of his venture, he had a stock of more than a million plants of 117 varieties, valued at £50,000. He had already sold over half a million. These plants now account for more than half his nursery business, while occupying less than a quarter of his thirty acres of greenhouses.

Back in 1947, when he grew his first indoor plants, no one took Rochford seriously. Shown a strange, unknown plant, all green stalk and leaf sprouting nakedly out of its pot, one of his directors exclaimed: "Do you mean to say that



At the Hoddesdon nurseries Tom Rochford tends his *Aphelandra Louisa* plants. He hopes to sell eight thousand this summer

Under Rochford's personal supervision assistants take cuttings to add further plants to his nursery's stock, worth £50,000

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY





Tom Rochford and his wife are themselves indoor plant lovers. At their home near the nursery they look after a *Sansevieria*



An assistant trains plants to grow up pieces of tree bark. This variation is popular with Rochford's customers

there are no blooms on these things?" Rochford even had to badger some of his three hundred workers into taking cuttings of what they called "Mr. Tom's weeds." In Covent Garden, people referred to the green plants as "Rochford's Folly" and traders told him that even if the plants did sell, there would soon be an end to the demand: they lasted too long.

Yet today Rochford is by far the biggest grower in a new industry which sells about a million plants a year and has an annual turnover averaging £50,000 to £70,000. The green plant revolution is the greatest change in the horticultural business within living memory.

People who at first had difficulty in pronouncing the strange Latin names of the plants now take a pride in remembering them. They collect plants, read about them and even plan the furnishings of their homes around them. They spend two or three shillings on a humble *Tradescantia*, or several pounds on the spiky *Sansevieria*, which is commonly known as "Mother-in-law's Tongue."

Rochford's best customers are the flat dwellers and the people living in the industrial areas of the Midlands and the North. But his plants have also found their way into Buckingham Palace, transatlantic liners and exhibition halls. And they have won a Gold Medal at the

Chelsea Flower Show, where Rochford exhibits them regularly.

Some people become so attached to the plants that they can't bear to see them trimmed back. A well-known London florist was once called to a small suburban flat to advise on a *Ficus pumila* which had virtually taken possession of the living-room. Having reached the ceiling its upper shoots had been trained along it and down the other wall. He says: "You could have climbed up that plant."

An actress who had bought a beautiful *Monstera* from a Mayfair shop once excitedly telephoned the general manager and reported that her cat had chewed off one of the leaves. "It looks so bare," she said. "You simply must do something about it." In the end the firm made a fake leaf to replace the one the cat had ruined.

Rochford finds that his best selling months are April, May and August; then comes a tremendous boom in November when fogs blanket Britain and people begin to look for fresh greenery. He sells mostly through three channels; his own firm's stand in Covent Garden, commission agents in all the big markets throughout the country, and direct to the retail trade.

Every morning, before the despatch department finally packs the day's orders, they telephone the Air Ministry for a special regional weather forecast. Experience has shown that when conditions were normal in Hertfordshire, frost, snow and hours of waiting on draughty station platforms elsewhere sometimes killed the plants before they reached their destination.

But his troubles are not confined to marketing. Rochford still remembers vividly the morning a few years ago when he discovered that thousands of his plants had come up with hopelessly deformed growth due to an all but invisible pest known as "mite." He finally mastered this, but while experiments lasted he had to suspend all sales for three months.

Occasionally the weather strikes him hard. Last February's blizzards lost him £4,000 worth of orders which could not be delivered because of the risk to the plants. They also sent his fuel bill up to an all-time record of £2,000 a week.

Rochford has the nurseryman's philosophical attitude to these ups and downs and they never stop him experimenting. "Mr. Tom likes to try things," says Stanley Faulkner, the head nurseryman. One morning during the cold

spell, Pat Coventry, who works in the greenhouse from which mature plants are sent off, found a handsome *Ficus pumila* with its growing tips tied up in knots. "Who on earth did that?" she demanded. Tom Rochford, quietly working at the other end of the greenhouse, replied: "Sorry, I just thought I'd see what would happen to the plant if I knotted it."

Most indoor plants come from Central America, Assam, South Africa, the Pacific Islands, Madagascar, Japan, the Solomons, Corsica, Mexico and the Congo. Rochford is always on the lookout for a new plant. Among those which he has sworn to find is a now seemingly extinct plant called *Maranta Rosea Picta*, a wide green leaf with a lovely pink border. "I have looked for it for eight years. It has almost a sentimental value for me. One day I'll find it."

The most quickly successful specimen he has ever introduced is a plant called *Aphelandra Louisa*. An exception among indoor plants, it has a pale yellow brush flower which blooms from June till Christmas. He managed to get a fairly large stock of cuttings and last summer he put the first ones on sale: in three weeks he sold over a thousand pots. Now he has a new greenhouse for this variety alone, and is growing eight thousand plants for next summer.

With one thousand of the plainer and easier growing varieties, Rochford today needs from six to eight months before he can gradually start selling. As soon as a batch of plants is received, the traditional order goes through to the workmen: "Strip the lot down." This means that every single plant is cut right down and the cutting is struck. The plant grows again and, depending on the numbers needed, it might be stripped again two or three times.

IN the early years of "Mr. Tom's weeds," Rochford did nothing but "strip the lot down" for nearly three years until he had a good stock. He says: "It was a terrific temptation to take a few plants, rush to the markets and try to recoup some of the very heavy expense incurred in raising a new variety. But it never paid to hurry. Plants just take their time."

Today he still spends more time in his greenhouses than in his office. Sundays are his favourite time for looking around the greenhouses while no one is around. Pat Coventry says: "On Monday mornings, here and there among the plants, are little notes in red ink saying: 'This plant needs cutting back' or 'This pot is dirty. It must not be sent away like this.'"

With home sales soaring higher all the time, Rochford is delving into the export trade in house plants and regularly sends specimens to most of the Dominions. Plants are often sent back to their country of origin. One day he showed a *Cissus antarctica* to some Australian visitors. He says: "They enthused about it and were just about to order some when I told them to look in their own back gardens at home. . . . The plant is a native of Australia where it is known as Kangaroo Vine."

His greatest surprise, however, was provided a few months ago by another Australian buyer who visited the nurseries and said: "Now, mark you, I don't want any of your quick-growing varieties. I'll just have the nice slowcoaches. The slowest you can find."

Every time Rochford showed him a particular plant, the Australian asked him how long it took to grow and then he would say: "No, slower please." Rochford who, from the business point of view, prefers a quick growing variety in which he won't sink too much capital, was nonplussed.

Finally he decided to ask the reason for the visitor's strange choice. The Australian turned to him and said: "Man, you don't know this Australia of ours. You put one of these quickies in our living-room and it'll be through the roof in no time."

THE END



One night in Dublin, Lorcan Bourke introduced Eamonn to his daughter, Grainne. Eamonn asked if he could drive her home. Now she is his wife

This Is *my* Life (3)

I bombard my target — BBC, London

by **EAMONN ANDREWS**

as told to **WILFRED GREATOREX**

First I pelted them with letters; then I sent recordings. But the answer was always the same: my voice was not exactly right



Stewart MacPherson's slick talk and novel phrases intrigued Eamonn. As his admiration grew, so did his dream of a job in London

WHEN I cycled from my home in Fairbrother's Fields to the police headquarters at Kilmainham Barracks one winter's morning late in 1945 I was in no trouble with the law, but the way I felt I might have been. Sensing my apprehension, the lanky sergeant of the *Garda Síochána* poured me a cup of tea and said: "All right. Get it off your chest, lad." I started to tell him about the script that never was.

For some months now I had worked as a freelance broadcaster and journalist after throwing up my job as a fire surveyor with the Hibernian Insurance Company. At first, things

had not gone too well, and all my attempts to break into branches of broadcasting other than boxing commentaries had come to nothing. I had cycled almost daily to Radio Eireann's studios in Henry Street, Dublin, seeking parts in plays and offering ideas for quiz and interview programmes. Boxing commentaries were infrequent, and the big narration jobs in plays and documentaries, which I wanted most of all, seemed beyond my reach. Then I was bowled over with an idea: if I could not narrate someone else's script, then I would write my own.

None of my suggestions hit the target until I offered the station a series of crime reconstructions. With this idea approved I approached a



At the Theatre Royal, Dublin, Martin Thornton (below) met Bruce Woodcock. The fight was a fiasco. Uproar followed and the lights went out. Eamonn had to broadcast in the dark



superintendent of the *Garda Siochana* who handed me over to a sergeant in the records department. The sergeant was most helpful and from our research I wrote several documentaries with myself as narrator under the title *Casebook On Crime*. Then, ironically, other work came up: soccer commentaries as well as those on boxing, and the occasional race reading over the loudspeakers at Baldoy Racecourse. I was averaging six or seven guineas a week, which was an improvement on the wage I had been getting in insurance.

While the *Casebook* series was running I was given my own disc jockey programme on Thursday nights—a commercial show sponsored by K. and S. Pure Food Products. After months of trying to find enough work to keep me occupied I now found myself with too much. I got behind with my *Casebook* scripts.

One afternoon, I was in the studio rehearsing the sponsored show when an assistant beckoned me over to the telephone. Francis MacManus was on the line, the same man who earlier had been one of my schoolmasters and who had asked after reading one of my poems whether I always suffered from a pain in the belly. He was now features director at Radio Eireann and was handling my crime series. He sounded harassed as he said, "Eamonn, we are programming the next *Casebook*. What's the title going to be?"

I had not thought of a title: in fact, I had not thought of another crime yet. To admit this would have been futile, so I said, "I haven't got a title for it at the moment."

MacManus persisted. "Tell me what the story is about and I'll try to think of one."

I said the first thing that came into my head. "It's about duplicating keys."

"All right," MacManus replied. "Let's call it *The Key* or something."

The sergeant of the *Garda Siochana* was my only hope. I admitted my predicament and, momentarily stumped, he stroked his chin as I prayed that somebody in Dublin Jail was there for having at some time used duplicated keys. He turned up a file with just the case to fit the title. I was filled with gratitude, but he curbed my enthusiasm by remarking casually, "All part of the service." I left thinking that the Dublin police were wonderful.

Even if it meant an occasional complication

of this kind, the increase in the work I was getting was just the filip I needed—and not only because it produced more money. The war in Europe just over, Dublin was busier than ever I had known it: life was moving on to a peacetime footing again and, although Eire had been neutral, the stringencies of wartime had been felt. Now, half-forgotten faces were appearing daily as the Irish volunteers came home from service with the British Army, the Royal Navy and the R.A.F.; urgent American accents were to be heard in the streets as G.I.s whose fathers or grandfathers had emigrated to the United States in that great trek over the years came to see the land of their forebears, and the big commercial houses were moving back into business as trade built up. Dublin was all rush and bustle, and until more work came along I had felt somehow isolated.

At home, I was conscious of my position as

the eldest child and once or twice wondered if in coming out on my own I had acted with a correct sense of responsibility. Not once in those first five weeks when the prospects looked dim had my parents remarked on my decision, but when things began to expand my mother did ask one night, when I was flushed with fresh confidence, how long this sort of thing was likely to last. My sisters and brother Noel, on the other hand, seemed pleased to have a broadcaster rather than an insurance man in the family.

Now that I was giving more time to it, I was learning plenty about broadcasting techniques and, of course, the snags caused by ordinary human failings which can so easily upset a programme. In one *Casebook* feature, my script called for a girl telephoning the police with a message about stolen goods and in this part was an attractive red-haired colleen who was also shortsighted. She was placed near a microphone



S. J. de Lotbinière, then a B.B.C. radio chief, said it was impossible to bring Eamonn from Ireland just for a test



Tom Chalmers, when with the B.B.C., told Eamonn that he might find work by going to London. Eamonn gave up his job and went



Band leader Joe Loss, with two beauty contestants. Loss offered Eamonn a British tour after watching him as quizmaster in *Double Or Nothing*. Eamonn saw it as a chance to serenade the B.B.C.

in a corner, right under the three control lights—red showing that the studio was “live”; green indicating that it was off the air, and amber giving the go-ahead for speech.

When the amber light flickered, the girl was peering at her script. It had gone out when she looked up. She peered at her script again and during this time the sergeant “answered” on another microphone. Once more the amber light flickered, and again she missed her cue. There were four or five mistimings before the glance and the light coincided and she spoke her lines. Listeners must have thought that the informant had changed her mind about telling the police, or else had an almighty stammer.

Broadcasting is littered with snags and vexations and, paradoxically, it was one of these—a commentary on a boxing match—that was to help me professionally, in an indirect way, more than any other job I had done either as a side-lining beginner or as a full-time freelance.

I should have known from the start that it

would be one of those trouble-ridden broadcasts. Up until the day of the fights, it was not established that there would be a commentary at all on the Jack Solomons promotion at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, where British champion Bruce Woodcock was meeting Martin Thornton, a whale of an Irishman from Spiddal, in Galway—a Gaelic-speaking area in the west.

Using an argument he has often adopted since, Solomons objected to a broadcast on the grounds that he had between four and five thousand seats to fill and the commentary would affect the attendance. Everything depended on a meeting between Solomons and the director of broadcasting on the day of the fights. After this get-together, it was announced that there would be no broadcast, and I was downtown having lunch a little later when, over the café’s radio, I heard the newsreader state that it *was* on, and that the fee was to be given to charity. This sounded to me as if Jack Solomons, whom I was to know well in the years to come, was

showing just what he thought of broadcast fees.

What was more important to me at that moment, however, was to get to the weigh-in. I left my lunch in the middle of the main course and headed for the Theatre Royal. There I explained to Thornton, a compact, muscular ex-labourer discovered by English boxing manager Arthur Boggis, that as a gesture to the Gaelic-speaking area from which he came I proposed to do part of my commentary in the native tongue. Were there any names he would like me to mention? Thornton was excited by this idea, and as I was leaving he hailed me back and said quietly, “Now, Eamonn, when you’re on the broadcast tell ‘em I did my best.”

This was *before* the fight.

It turned out to be dire. Completely out-classed, Thornton had no reply to Woodcock’s heavy punching, and it was all over in three rounds. Instantly, there was a fantastic reaction as the crowd, disgusted at the uneven contest, booed, stamped their feet, shouted catcalls and threw a variety of objects including bottles. I had felt aggrieved that, due to the late decision about the broadcast, I had not been allocated a place at the ring-side. Now, watching this pandemonium from a box high over the stage, I felt distinctly relieved.

The quick finish left me with a lot of time on my tongue. I described the wild scene below, summed up what there had been of the fight and then, having exhausted the obvious material, talked about everything relevant and irrelevant. Eventually, I turned in desperation to the programme with its biographical notes about other boxers on that night’s bill: but even this release was only temporary, for suddenly the hall lights went out. In the dark with nothing to see, very little to say, and a lot of time left in which to say it, I rambled on about heaven only knows what.

When the lights came on again I had been talking in the blackout for a quarter of an hour.

I had done everything except whistle and sing, and it must have sounded appalling. Radio Eireann considered that it was a fair effort to overcome the difficulties, and commentaries came up more frequently. I was given another series, sharing a Friday afternoon cross-talk show with Louis Spiro, a sad-faced business man whose eyes always gave the impression that the

Continued on page 41

Eddie Byrne (left) and James Donald, while rehearsing for the TV play, *A Trial Of Love*. Eamonn succeeded Byrne in a give-away show



The Tokoloshi's Ball Pen



ITOMOLENG woke at dawn. His wakening was instantaneous and his first thought was that James had brought a tin of plum jam home last night so there would be something on the bread for breakfast this morning.

His second thought was of the ball pen he had found in the street. He lived through again the hot thrill he had experienced when he had seen the slim red barrel lying before him, a brand-new pen which had fallen from somebody's pocket on his way home from work.

He crossed his hands behind his head and delicious realizations of his riches passed through his fourteen-year-old mind. What could he not do with this ball pen of his!

Should he take it to school with him and glory in the envious looks of his class-mates? No, he could not do that today, there was no school on Saturday: it would have to wait till Monday.

Should he trade it with Peter Moletsane for the latter's bag of lucky bones which his grandfather had given to him? Certainly Peter's bones were coveted by the whole street. But then nobody, as far as he knew, had a ball pen. Which would give greater prestige—bones or ball pen?

He could see by the boiling kettle that the stove had long been made; the swish of the straw broom outside indicated that his mother was busy sweeping the ground. James lay on one side of him, breathing rhythmically, his bony nose thrust up to the ceiling; on the other side, Victory was curled up under the blankets, still in the deep sleep of childhood; his father's bed, against the far wall, was neatly made: he had not yet come home from his work as a night-watchman.

There was no sound from the other room where his two sisters and the grandmother slept. The baby must be clinging to his mother's back.

Itomoleng exulted silently: he was first up this morning. He jumped from the mattress and quickly put on his jeans and yellow shirt. He thrust his hand into the back pocket of his trousers to draw out the pen, to take one proud look before the rest of the family woke—and froze in horrified amazement.

The pen was not there. The pocket was empty.

A feeling of awful desolation swept the boy. His possession, his beautiful new acquisition, had been stolen. There was no doubt of it. Last night he had placed it in his pocket, and fingered it lovingly before falling asleep; today it was gone.

But no one could have come into the room during the night; his mother was a light sleeper and would most surely have been aroused. Then—someone in the family must have removed it. Who? Not James—he was too honest. Not the girls—what would they do with a ball pen? One—one only could have taken it; his ten-year-old brother Victory!

He leaned over the suspected culprit and shook him fiercely by the shoulder until Victory's eyes snapped open in startled surprise.

"My pen!" whispered Itomoleng. "My pen! You took it from my pocket. Give it back! Or I will certainly kill you!"

"I do not take your pen," stuttered Victory. "I did not even know you had a pen. I do not know what you are talking about."

Itomoleng glared at him. Then he slowly

extended his hands and gripped his brother's ears. "I will pull off your ears one by one," he said slowly with terrible emphasis, "unless you give me back my pen."

Victory opened his mouth and let out a piercing yell; the tears streamed down his cheeks. "Mama!" he screamed. "Help me! Itomoleng is going to kill me."

James, abruptly aroused from a pleasant dream, jumped up, his eyes blazing, but before he could take action Martha rushed in from outside.

She took in the situation at a glance, and, for all her heavy bulk, moved with amazing swiftness: a heavy hand fell on the side of Itomoleng's head, knocking him to one side; a shrill voice, long accustomed to asserting itself, heaped vituperation on him.

"Loafer! Dog! Tsotsi!" she shrieked. "Murdering my little one! You will end up in jail for your crimes. You will starve in the street. You good-for-nothing, out of my house! Come to Mama, my little one."

She gathered Victory in her voluminous arms and glared at her offending son. Itomoleng, well aware of his mother's mercurial temperament, shook his fist at the boy clinging to the massive waist and walked as jauntily as he could from the room.

It was the beginning of a brilliant day, and at that early hour the air was sweet and clean. Itomoleng, hands in pockets, leaned against a lamp-post and stared blankly up the road.

He became suddenly alert as Peter Moletsane, a youth of his own age, emerged from a door a few houses away.

"Hallo, Peter. Where are you off to?"

"My mother has sent me to my Aunt Maria for some sugar," said Peter laconically.

"I will walk with you, Peter," said Itomoleng, ingratiatingly, "for I have something to say to you."

THEY strode off together, two youths of the same height, same age, their long shadows only a little darker than the deep-brown hue of their smooth skins.

"That bag of lucky bones your grandfather gave you," said Itomoleng casually, "do you still own it?"

"Certainly I do," said Peter proudly. "I would not part with it for five pounds. Listen, Itomoleng, I will tell you this because you are my friend. Yesterday I threw the bones, and they showed there is great fortune coming to me within the next few weeks."

Itomoleng's mouth watered at this patent evidence of the power of the bones, but his face was bland. "That is good news, Peter. I also am lucky, but my fortune is with me now. I did not have to wait a few weeks."

The other was immediately filled with curiosity, but it would not do to show it too obviously. He merely said: "Oh? I am pleased for your sake."

They walked on slowly. Itomoleng whistled unconcernedly, but he watched his companion from the corner of his eye.

At length, with a show of indifference, Peter said: "Your luck must be really good, Itomoleng. You seem very happy."

"Oh, yes," said Itomoleng, "I am pretty well pleased. Anyone in Newclare would be pleased

Itomoleng found it in the street.

How was he to know that it would summon
an evil spirit? by RONALD BYRON

if they had found what I have found. It is not often one finds what I have found."

Peter stopped, his eyes now wide.

"Tell me what you have found."

"Yesterday," Itomoleng said, "not far from my mother's house, I found—" he paused for proper emphasis—"I found a pen!"

"A pen?"

"Yes—but not an ordinary pen. It is a ball pen. A red ball pen."

Peter drew a deep breath. He convinced himself that all his life he had desired a red ball pen. He rushed in, his racial caution forgotten.

"Would you wish to exchange your ball pen, Itomoleng, for anything I have?"

It is mine! thought Itomoleng exultantly. *The bag of bones is mine! But I must go slowly, I must not give in yet.*

"I do not think I would exchange this pen," he said. "I would like to show it to our teacher. Also, we are soon to have our examinations, and I will certainly have better marks with a pen that writes well."

As Itomoleng knew they would, these words fired Peter with increased zeal, for he was an industrious pupil, often being complimented at school for his application and intelligence.

"Better marks would not be of much use to you, Itomoleng," he said eagerly. "You are already near the bottom of the class, and I am at the top. Give me that pen and you can have two of anything I own."

Itomoleng frowned. The offer was better than he had expected, but Peter's choice of words was a little insulting. "No," he said, abruptly sullen, "I do not wish to exchange."

But Peter was now wildly desirous. "There is really not much you can do with it, Itomoleng," he urged. "For your pen, I—" he hesitated, then took the plunge. "I will give you my bones. My wise grandfather's bones! Perhaps they have something special to say to you. My grandfather said they always spoke the truth."

This was precisely what Itomoleng had been thinking earlier. His decision veered again. "Okay, Peter, I will give you my own pen for your bones. Because you are my friend."

Peter breathed with relief and satisfaction. "You are certainly my friend, Itomoleng. Now let me look at it." He held out his hand expectantly.

Automatically the other reached for his back pocket. And remembrance suddenly flooded back. Someone—Victory!—had taken it. He thought frantically of some excuse. Those bones—so near! He must say something, put Peter off a few hours until he had forced Victory to return his possession.

Peter noticed his hesitation immediately.

"What is the matter, Itomoleng?" he asked suspiciously.

"Nothing—nothing, my friend," replied Itomoleng hurriedly. "I—I thought I had it in my pocket, but now I remember I left it under the mattress. Come to my mother's house after

"Loafer! Dog!" she shrieked at Itomoleng. "You will end up in jail for your crimes!"

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI



breakfast with your bag of bones, and we will exchange."

They walked on. Itomoleng's face was calm, but he was thinking furiously.

Itomoleng had little appetite for his porridge at breakfast. No solution to his problem had presented itself.

Martha quickly observed his trifling with the spoon. "Does my porridge not taste well enough for you, my son?" she inquired sarcastically.

Itomoleng shook his head despondently. "Your porridge tastes well, my mother. But I cannot eat, for I do not feel good. I have many troubles." He cast a vicious look at Victory. "Yesterday I found a red ball pen in the street. I took it with me to bed. Today, when I awoke, it was gone."

"Before breakfast Peter Moletsane wanted to trade his wise grandfather's bones for it, and after we had made the trade I suddenly remembered that I had not got it, and he is coming for it just now, and I will not have it, and he will call me a liar and a boaster." His voice rose venomously. "But I know who has that ball pen." He pointed dramatically at his younger brother. "It is that Victory!"

All eyes turned to the accused.

"Have you taken Itomoleng's pen?" asked Martha, sonorously.

Tears filled Victory's liquid brown eyes. "Mama, it is not true, I have not touched his pen. But I know—I know who stole it."

"You know?" said James pontifically. James was the eldest son and his words carried great weight in the family. "Tell us then, little one, before this matter goes any further."

Victory breathed deeply. "It was a—a tokoloshi!"

A heavy silence settled on the room. No one thought of deriding the child. All knew the habits of the tokoloshi, the evil spirit which sometimes entered a house, often at the behest of a witch-doctor skilled in such matters, murdering infants, thieving and pillaging.

Victory pursued his theme eagerly. "It was very dark, but the tokoloshi woke me. It stood near Itomoleng's mattress, and it took his pen and put it into his pocket. Then—then," his roving gaze settled on his eldest sister, Molatledi, "it went into Molatledi's room and I saw it no more."

Molatledi shivered. Her younger sister, Maria, began to snivel.

"This tokoloshi," said James gravely, "what did it look like, Victory?"

"It was taller than you, my brother," said Victory, somewhat hesitantly, "and it had a face like a—like a dog. Yes, surely it had a face like a dog. And four red eyes. And six feet. And a tail like a horse. And ears like an elephant. It was very horrible."

This vivid description clinched the case for Martha.

"We need a doctor," she said decisively. "We must call Uncle Tobias."

MARIA was sent for Uncle Tobias, whose appearance lifted the family's morale a little. He was a short, scraggy, wiry native with a wisp of a beard, and beady, penetrating eyes: he was very eminent in Newclare, for he had many years and much experience in evil doings.

Quickly appreciating from Maria's garbled message that serious things were afoot, he had donned a white robe and smeared his forehead with yellow ochre. He brought a multi-coloured staff with him, and, knowing the Dikgole family, he had tentatively fixed on £5 as payment for his services.

Now he listened impassively, except for rapid darting glances at each of the family in turn, while James represented to him the suspected events of the night.

At the conclusion of the recital, Uncle Tobias leaned back in his chair and made a tent of his fingers.

"I am afraid for this family," he said

seriously. "There may be much evil in the wind. There may be much trouble in the soil. I cannot tell at once how far matters have gone. The ways of those evil spirits are not known to any but the most wise of men."

He paused to calculate the effects of his words; the family was listening in fascinated awe.

Satisfied, he continued, "It is well that you called me, for I am the wisest man in this township. Naught is hidden from me, even the path of a tokoloshi. I will need a little time alone in this room, at first with the small one who saw the devil. Much knowledge is necessary and some material."

He paused again, expectantly. Martha required no prodding; she went silently to her wardrobe, and returned with a small bundle of £1 notes, placing them singly into Uncle Tobias's languid hand, until five had been counted and he motioned her to stop. Then all, with the exception of Victory, left the room and huddled together outside the house.

VICTORY began to tremble when he was left alone with the witch-doctor. The latter rose swiftly from his chair when the door was closed and knelt down near the child.

"Perhaps you only dreamed you saw the tokoloshi, Victory, my son," he said softly, "perhaps you talked of things of which you know little. They say he who sees the tokoloshi will be taken by the tokoloshi. You know it is within my power to bring it here now, this moment."

"I could ask it if it had been seen by Victory Dikgole last night. It would know. It would answer me. It would be bad if what you have told your family is true."

A frightened sob escaped the boy.

"But if you had only had a dream," pursued the old man relentlessly, "it may be that you could find this pen and give it to me now, while all are waiting outside. Then we would see how to go on in this matter."

Almost hypnotized by the beady eyes and the threatening words, Victory groped in his pocket and brought out the pen.

Uncle Tobias took it gently. "You may go out now, my child," he said, "and leave me alone until I call you all. But no one—" his voice suddenly deepened with menace—"no one, you understand, shall know of our talk." The boy nodded and backed fearfully out.

For a minute or two after he had left, Uncle Tobias looked covetously at the red ball pen. It meant nothing to him that the £5 he had taken from Martha could purchase a score of such objects; that was money he hoarded carefully in a deep hole under his bed; that was holy money, not for material things like ball pens. But he loved this ball pen: it was most certainly a fine thing.

He placed the pen carefully on the table, then squatted down, muttering to himself. He took a few herbs from a small bag round his neck and strewed them about in an irregular circle. He blew some strong-smelling granules into the air. He chanted a monotonous dirge. Then in a deep vibrant voice which easily penetrated to those waiting outside, he enunciated a single word: "Begone!"

Finally, he opened the door and beckoned to the expectant family.

Uncle Tobias faced them confidently. "There has been a tokoloshi in this house," he pronounced. "I have spoken to it, and warned it that I will stand in front of you. It agreed to give up the pen." He pointed to the table.

Itomoleng gasped, and moved to pick it up. Uncle Tobias stayed him with an imperious gesture.

"That pen is accursed, my child," he said gravely. "The tokoloshi returned it, but warned me that none might touch it without straightway dropping dead. None—but I. I alone as a doctor may now possess it. I must take it away, for I do not wish anyone in this family to die."

Itomoleng's face portrayed his desolation at

this cruel fate, but Martha raised her hands in thanksgiving; Molatledi's face lightened; James shook Uncle Tobias's hand gratefully.

In the midst of these felicitations, a new voice intruded itself.

"What is this gathering in my house?" it inquired sternly. "James, why are you not at work? What has happened?"

Martha turned with relief to the newcomer. Her husband had returned home from work. The excitement, the responsibility, the fortunate escape from dire peril could now be imparted to him.

George Dikgole advanced into the room, a heavy, powerful man, with a grizzled crop of



Itomoleng watched his companion from the corner of his eye. Pretending indifference, Peter said, "Your luck must be really good"

hair. He was an elder in the African Church of Zion, an authoritative, dominant figure.

"Have you all gone mad?" he demanded. His eye suddenly fell on the pen. "Ah!" he said, in lighter tones. "My new pen! I lost it yesterday when going to work. Who has found it?"

James caught his arm frantically as he moved to pick the pen up.

"No, Papa, no!" he stuttered. "The pen—do not pick it up! It is accursed."

George looked sharply at his eldest son. "What nonsense is this? How can a pen be accursed?"

"It is true, Papa. A tokoloshi stole it from

Itomoleng. Uncle Tobias has spoken to the tokoloshi and compelled it to return the pen but now there is a curse on it and anyone who picks it up will drop dead."

"Must it then remain on our table for ever?" his father asked.

"No. Uncle Tobias has promised to take it away. Because he is a doctor, the tokoloshi cannot harm him."

"That is most interesting," George said. A small smile was playing about his mouth but his eyes had gone hard and they were fixed on Tobias.

"But suppose I do not wish Uncle Tobias to have my pen? Suppose I do not wish to

accept his protection from this tokoloshi? Suppose I simply pick up the pen—?"

There were little gasps and murmurs of fear from his family as he reached out to take the small red object, and Uncle Tobias hastily put out his hands to fend him off.

"Suppose I pick the pen up and do not drop dead?" George Dikgole asked. "I am sure Uncle Tobias is very wise in the ways of tokoloshis, but perhaps he credits them with greater powers than they possess. For my part, I have never seen one and I am quite willing to defy this one rather than allow Uncle Tobias to have a pen which I have paid for and he has not."

Uncle Tobias licked his lips.

"This is madness, Husband," Martha cried. "Five pounds I have given to Uncle Tobias to protect us. Must you throw your life away after I have given up so much of our savings?"

"Is this true?" George asked. His voice was more harsh than his children ever remembered it, but it was not directed at any of them. It was directed at Uncle Tobias.

"I must be paid for my services," Uncle Tobias said. He would not meet George's gaze.

"I will make a bargain with you," George said. "I will pick up my pen. If I die instantly, you may keep the five pounds and my pen and a further five pounds which I here and now instruct my wife to pay to you."

"But if I do not drop dead—" now there was an unmistakable twinkle in his eye—"then you must return the money which has been paid to you, since it will then be clear that your tokoloshi is not as powerful as you believe and we have no need to pay such a high price for protection from it."

Uncle Tobias's mouth was agape. His eyes rolled, his hands moved in a helpless gesture.

"There is another way out of this problem," George said more gently. "You could return my five pounds, exert your great influence upon the tokoloshi and force him to lift the curse from this pen. Could you do that?"

"It would be possible," Tobias muttered.

"Then do so quickly," George said, "before I pick up my pen and put your tokoloshi's powers to the test myself! I will have the five pounds my foolish wife gave you. Now, please!"

SULLENLY Tobias returned the money, murmured some incantation, waved his hand half-heartedly over the pen.

"The curse has been lifted," he said.

Avoiding George's eyes, he strode to the door with an over-dignified gait and took himself out into the street, brushing past Peter Moletsane who appeared in the doorway carrying his bag of lucky bones.

"I have brought them, Itomoleng," Peter said eagerly. "Where is the pen?"

"Good morning, Peter," Itomoleng's father said. "And what do you know about this pen? Have you, too, found a tokoloshi to put a curse on it?"

Itomoleng stepped between his puzzled friend and his father and began to explain.

"I found the pen in the street, Papa, and promised to exchange it for Peter's lucky bones. They may have a special message for me."

He turned to Peter with a ring of pride in his voice. "But a tokoloshi put a curse on the pen and Papa made Uncle Tobias lift the curse. I cannot give it to you now because it is a very special pen. And anyway it belongs to Papa."

His father laughed, handed him the pen.

"Here, give it to your friend and have your magic bones. I will get myself another, and perhaps when you are a little older and have become a man and are no longer afraid of foolish people like Uncle Tobias and their imaginary tokoloshis, I will pass it on to you."

He took off his hat and placed it on the table. He sat down and looked sternly at his wife.

"And now let us have an end to this nonsense," he said. "Martha, hurry with my breakfast, I am hungry."

THE END

James Rushworth at the piano which Beethoven played. Visitors often go down on their knees to kiss the keys



The record department. A busker who visits the shop always does a song and dance for the assistants there



Market-place for melody

by REX GRIZELL

There's always a riot of sound at James Rushworth's music shop—though boogie-woogie on a harpsichord is banned

As a salesman in James Rushworth's Liverpool music shop totted up a customer's bill, the man asked for cavalry trumpets in addition to the £150 worth of instruments, including bugles, orchestral trumpets, drums, accordion, and numerous smaller pieces that he had already bought. The salesman advised him not to take the cavalry trumpets as they had no place in an orchestra.

"Who said anything about an orchestra?" said the customer. "They make a good blast, don't they?" He explained that he wanted the instruments for the education of his next door neighbour, who had taken to knocking on the wall "every time we have a bit of a party." The man paid cash for the instruments and went away saying: "I'm his landlord. I'll teach him to knock on the wall. I'll show him what noise is really like."

As chairman and managing director of what he claims is the world's largest music shop, Rushworth and Dreaper, James Rushworth has learned to take the unexpected in his stride. Cosmopolitan Liverpool brings him customers of every kind: Chinese, Africans, Malaysians, American Service men, and seamen from every country in the world, as well as industrial

workers from the north and eccentric musicians.

Since the war Rushworth, a tall, suave hustler in his forties, who describes himself as "a big fish in a very small pond," has more than doubled the size of the family business, founded in 1828. He now has a staff of over four hundred, and supplies anything to do with music from a gramophone needle to a £20,000 cathedral organ built in his own works.

The headquarters at Islington, Liverpool, include a concert hall, a lecture hall, twelve practice studios, a restaurant, a pipe organ practice studio, showrooms for pianos, violins and orchestral instruments, television, radio, sheet music and record departments, a concert promotion department and "the finest collection of playable antique instruments in Europe."

Rushworth values his stock in hundreds of thousands of pounds; even the sheet music is reckoned at £10,000. The firm has a staff of thirty tuners who maintain 42,000 pianos in the north west, including the £1,750 Steinway concert grand used by the world's greatest pianists in Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall, and the Rushworth pianos in every Cunard liner.

Rushworth refers to his firm as "the spiritual

home of music outside London—and even there there's nothing quite like it." Any and every kind of musician is welcome at Rushworth's, from the seventy-year-old busker who comes to them regularly for his harmonicas, always pays with a bag of pennies, and does a song and dance for the girls in the record department, to such great pianists as Solomon and Claudio Arrau, who use the Rushworth practice studios when they have engagements in Liverpool.

Famous artists booked by the firm, early in their careers, for concerts in the Rushworth Hall include John Barbirolli, Myra Hess, Casadesu, Gerald Moore, Harriet Cohen, Lionel Tertis, and the Griller String Quartet.

The showrooms are often the scene of impromptu performances. When Nat King Cole's drummer came in for new drums, other members of the band with him could not resist his playing as he tried them out. They borrowed other instruments and soon there was a jam session in progress. "The joint was really jumping," says a jazz enthusiast among the salesmen.

EACH day Rushworth examines the sales of Every department. "He knows every sheet of paper in the building and every penny in the till," says Norman Mullineux, an executive director. "And he likes to hear unusual stories behind the sales." A schoolboy of twelve came in with his father and asked to see xylophones. They began by showing him toy ones costing a few shillings, but the boy showed little enthusiasm until he was shown a vibraphone costing £145. His father bought it.

Rushworth's collection of antique musical instruments includes the piano on which Beethoven played during his visits to Count von Oppersdorf at Obergoglan Castle, Saxony. "I can't tell you the number of people I've seen

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON



The firm builds organs worth £20,000—and sells gramophone needles. At a private house, a tuner found two bags full of sovereigns in an organ



Chief polisher Ted Gorst (right) once had to hand-stain and polish a £900 piano to match a customer's furniture



go down on their knees to kiss the keys of that piano," says Mullineux.

The firm's many services to music have admittedly a strictly business side, and Rushworth points out the commercial value of the antiques. "It's much easier to invite people to come and look at my collection, than to ask them to look at the shop." In the past ten years 40,000 people have seen it. "Twice through the shop with our goods in front of them all the time."

The collection has been enthusiastically visited by most of the world's great musicians. Gigli walked round in reverent silence; Solomon played music of the appropriate period on every keyboard instrument. Equally enthusiastic visitors were two American servicemen who were found improvising boogie-woogie on a seventeenth-century harpsichord. "I stopped them," says the curator. "I was afraid it would fall to pieces under that treatment."

Rushworth specializes in keyboard instruments, and never has fewer than three hundred pianos of all makes and sizes in stock. He says that years ago a piano in the parlour was a mark of respectability, and families would buy them even when nobody in the house could play. He remembers one of the old Liverpool shawl women who bought a costly German upright piano and paid for it from a wad of notes taken from a purse on a string beneath her skirt. Two weeks later the woman returned and asked for another piano, "because the room looked lopsided and she wanted another to go on the other side of the fireplace."

Nothing has been changed in the piano workshop during the fifty years that Tommy Burgoyne, the foreman, has worked there, though he remembers that there used to be a small room next door, now part of the polishing shop, from which James Rushworth's uncle John flew

racing pigeons. In pianos brought in for repair, Burgoyne has found false teeth, spectacles, old photographs, and sweets.

During the war a piano from a transatlantic liner was found to be stuffed with boxes of 250 cigarettes. "Very queer tone it had too," says Burgoyne. On another occasion he found two large bags containing hundreds of gold sovereigns in an organ he was tuning in a private house.

A violin department deals in anything from reconditioned prewar instruments, which Rushworth sells to learners at £5 each, to the genuine work of master craftsmen. The best he has at present is an old Florentine violin costing £350.

According to Fred Fallowfield, Rushworth's chief luthier or violin builder, people come in almost every week with violins which they think

are worth a great deal of money. Very occasionally they are right. One woman, the wife of a Liverpool doctor, bought a violin for 1s. 6d. at a jumble sale in a North Wales village church. It turned out to be the work of an Italian maker named Carlo Bergonzi and worth several hundred pounds. During his thirty years with the firm, Fallowfield has had eight genuine Stradivarius violins. The last, sold for two thousand guineas, was "not a very fine specimen."

Long service is one of many traditions in the firm. When Rushworth decided to show his appreciation by presenting a clock to employees with more than twenty-five years' service, he found he had to present seventy-one clocks. He has since presented a further thirty. Norman Mullineux recalls that when he joined the firm as a boy of fifteen, employees had to keep to a uniform dark suit, white shirt, dark tie; and there was a shoe and hair inspection every morning.

This rule was reluctantly abandoned during wartime, but in his most recent speech to heads of departments James Rushworth advised them to "watch the hairstyles of your girls and keep them in dark clothes during business hours."

RUSHWORTH is a married man, with four young sons to carry on the family tradition. He plays a great part in the local organization of music, being an active member of more than fifty local civic and musical societies—and he makes a point of attending concerts at the Philharmonic Hall.

One thing he would like to be able to do is to forecast the public's taste in musical instruments. "Just before the war piano accordions were the rage, and we sold a lot of mouth-organs. Now the harmonica is an orchestral instrument with concertos written for it, and guitars, trumpets and trombones are the fashion."

When he recently opened a new branch in Birkenhead a brick was thrown through the window on the first night, and somebody stole a trombone. In his hurry the thief left behind the mouthpiece. When Rushworth—he is a J.P.—was given the news he commented "It's good publicity" and made a note to tell his salesman to take the name of anyone who came in to buy a trombone mouthpiece.

THE END



Rushworth with Fred Fallowfield, chief violin builder. Most people who bring "valuable" violins are disillusioned

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Beyond the black stump

Continued from page 18

his companion, "we know who Pro Bono Publico is, now."

Mrs. Regan and Molly came out on the veranda. The newspaper men thanked them for their hospitality, and said that they must get going now to the Americans' camp.

Molly said, "I'd better go with them, Ma. It's not very easy for a stranger."

The newspaper men protested that they could find their way, but Mrs. Regan approved the idea.

"I'll get some ice-cream, too," the girl said. She went off and changed into drill slacks and shirt, and got into the Land-Rover, and went off with the men.

Stanton Laird came out to meet them as they drove up. Molly made the introductions, and they went into the office tent out of the sun.

DUNCAN MANN said: "I'll tell you what we've come about, Mr. Laird. There was a letter published in the *Geraldton Advocate* that said that you'd been drilling in a cemetery. We came to the conclusion there was nothing in that story, and my editor killed it when he'd talked about it with your Mr. Spriggs. What did interest us was this news of a gas seepage you'd discovered, which came out while my editor was talking to Mr. Spriggs. Now that's real news, here in Australia. My editor thought he'd better send us up to write a feature or two on what you're doing here."

The geologist nodded. "That's okay," he said. "I did hear there'd been a letter. Do you know what was in it?"

"I've got it here," The reporter pulled out his wallet, extracted a cutting, and spread it out upon the drawing board for them to read.

Stanton Laird said slowly: "Well, what do you know?"

The girl said, "Oh, Stan!"

The geologist asked the reporter: "Do you know who wrote this?"

Duncan Mann smiled broadly. "We've just had dinner at Miss Regan's homestead. I might make a guess."

The girl said: "The Judge gets a sort of bee in his bonnet sometimes. I'm so sorry, Stan."

The geologist smiled. "That's okay, Molly." He turned to the reporters. "I guess it was kind of unusual to go running seismic soundings through a cemetery, but we did get permission."

All afternoon Stanton and Spencer were busy with the journalists. It was arranged that the visitors should stay in the Americans' camp and take a series of photographs next day. In the fading light they offered to drive Molly back to Laragh.

"That's okay," said Stanton. "I'll run her back home after supper." He turned to the girl. "You'll stay for supper, Molly?" He smiled. "We're on maple ice-cream this week."

"I'd love to," she said. She wanted to be driven home by Stanton. Somehow she must let him know that at Laragh they really did appreciate the Americans, in spite of what the Judge had said in his letter.

She sat in thought while he drove her home in the jeep, not knowing how to broach the subject that she wanted to discuss. When they topped the last low rise and the white roof of the shearing shed appeared in the bright moonlight a mile ahead of them, she felt she had to do something.

She said: "Stan, stop here a minute. I want to talk."

He pulled up and switched off the engine.

"Stan, it's about the Judge. He's not really like that, you know."

He smiled down at her. "Don't think of it," he said.

"I wouldn't like you to think that he was trying to do you any harm. He's English, you know. He's awfully English, although he's been here so long. He'd think of it as making an oil well all in among tombstones."

"Wouldn't he have been there?"

"Oh, I shouldn't think so. He can't ride a horse, and he doesn't

often go out on the station. I don't suppose he's ever seen it in his life."

He glanced at her. "Is he a bit nuts?"

She shook her head. "He gets a bit confused sometimes, but that's just the rum."

He laughed. "If I drank that much rum I'd be confused all the time."

She looked up in surprise. "He doesn't drink a great deal. Daddy drinks twice as much."

"You don't think it hurts?"

She shook her head. "Ma cuts it down when she thinks they've had enough. She was a barmaid before she married Uncle Tom, you know."

"I always thought Mr. Pat Regan was your father."

"He is," she said. "I suppose we're rather a difficult family for strangers to understand. You see, after Mike and Charlie and Bridget were born, Ma and Uncle Tom didn't get on very well together, so Ma left Uncle Tom and married Daddy. It makes us rather a complicated family, but that's how it happened."

He blinked. "Didn't that make things kind of difficult? I mean, did they just go on here together, just the same?"

She laughed. "I don't know, Stan. I wasn't born. It seems to have worked out all right. Only, of course, Father Ryan says that Ma and Dad aren't married."

He blinked again. "Didn't they get married?"

"They can't, because we can't get a divorce. Father Ryan says Ma's still married to Uncle Tom, but of course that's not right. It's all a bit of a muddle."

He sat for a moment looking out over the rolling downs of spinifex. "I'm mighty glad you told me all of this," he said. "It kind of helps to get the picture straight."

She looked up at him, a little wistfully. "Does it all seem very terrible to you, Stan?"

She was very appealing to him in that moment.

"Not a bit terrible," he said. "It's just kind of different from things at home. But then, the whole country's so different."

"Do we seem like a lot of savages to you, Stan?"

He turned to her. "I guess people are the same all over." He smiled down at her gently in the dim light. "If you wore pedal-pushers instead of these long pants you'd be just the

COURAGE—1

Many would be cowards if they had courage enough.

Fuller

same as any girl in my home town. Only a whole lot prettier than most."

She drew a little closer to him in the jeep, and when his arm slipped round her shoulders she did not protest. "Tell me about your home town, Stan," she said. "What's it called, and where is it?"

He told her, and she listened entranced to the description of a new world, a world that matched the magazines she had been reading, lulled by the warm comfort of his hand upon her shoulder.

"It must be marvellous to live there," she said. "I wonder you can bear to leave it and come away to places like Australia."

He smiled. "I guess Australia's not so bad as that," he said. "But I'd say this is probably my last assignment outside the States." He went on to tell her of the offer that his father had made him; it was an easing and a relief to talk it over with the girl. "I think I'll be writing to the old man pretty soon, 'n' say that I'll be joining him next year."

Presently she stirred in his arms. "It's getting pretty late, Stan," she said. "I love hearing you talk about America, but don't let's start anything with Ma or Daddy."

He laughed and released her. "I'd

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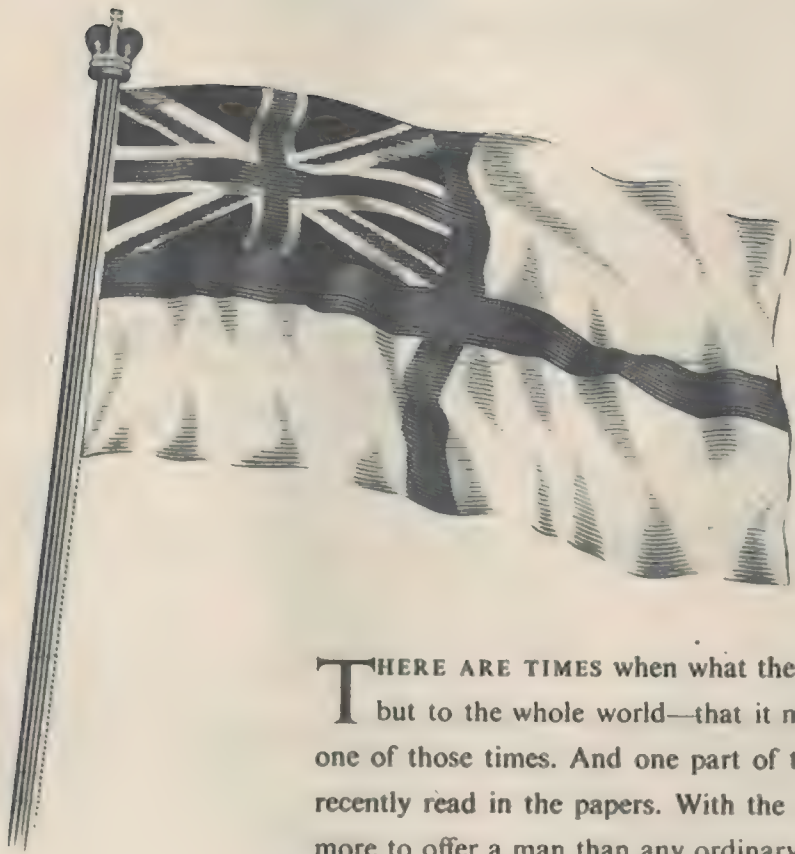
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just as soon not start anything with your father."

She wriggled her shirt straight upon her shoulders.

"One thing, Stan," she said. "Why do you say that you'll be joining your father next year? Why not now, if he wants you to help him?"

"We got to make a hole first." "Here?"

"Uh-huh. It's just a question now of fixing the exact location. I'd say we'd have the drilling rig up here within a month. I couldn't go away until we've drilled the well."

He started the engine and drove her to the homestead. She got out, and turned to bid him goodnight. "It was awfully nice of you to drive me home," she said. "Thanks so much."

"You know somethin'?" he inquired. "I'm kind of glad I haven't got to go away at once."

"So am I," she said.

He raised his hand. "'Bye now." The jeep vanished in a swirl of dust.

In the next few weeks the oil activity on Laragh Station increased enormously. Great trailer trucks began to come through, manned mostly by Australians, bringing huge loads of the components of prefabricated buildings, pre-drilled girders for the great tower of the oil rig, tanks, pumps, diesel engines, cement, pipes, cooking stoves, beds and furniture, cases of foodstuffs, drums of diesel oil and everything else needed for a camp of nearly a hundred very highly paid men about to drill a hole that might be two miles deep.

All this was normal to the Americans, a routine that they had been through many times before. Even the camp plan was normal to them; the cookhouse and messroom here, the recreation room there, showers and toilets here, the septic tank there, the two rows of two-bed cabins here, the office there. In consequence it all went up incredibly quickly.

To the Regans the growth of the camp was little short of magical. One week there was nothing there but the tents of the survey party; a fortnight later the place seemed full of houses."

"Sure," said Pat Regan in the evening rum session, "ye'd think all the devils in hell were chasing after them biting at their tails. Aren't they the restless fellows?"

The growth of the camp was as fascinating to Mrs. Regan as it was to Molly. Most days they drove over in the jeep, with the two younger children in the back, to park on the hillside above the camp out of the way, and to watch the buildings going up.

In all these new interests and excitements Mollie found that she was seeing

a good deal less of David Cope than in the months before the Americans had come to Laragh.

Before their arrival he had called for her nearly every week to take her to the film show at Mannahill. Now, with the growth of the camp beside the drilling rig, the Americans had instituted their own movie show with better films than Clem Rogerson could produce and a much shorter distance to drive; Mrs. Regan and Molly fell into the habit of going to the movies there at least once a week.

Molly met David Cope at these American shows, and often sat with him to see the film, but the old community born of the long drives to Mannahill in his jeep had been broken.

He seldom saw the girl now to speak to alone, and he was very conscious that she was seeing a good deal more of the American geologist than she was of him. The old days when he had shyly asked her for her photograph and she had shyly given it to him now seemed a long way away; with the coming of the Americans they had drifted apart, and his life was the emptier for it.

EARLY in February she came to the movie show alone, driving in the jeep. There was now no danger of getting lost when driving by night between the oil site and Laragh, for a graded road, unmetalled but a road in very truth, now led back to the homestead.

Stanton Laird had gone to Perth for a conference, or she would hardly have been free to talk with David Cope after the movie. She walked with him to where their jeeps were parked side by side in the bright moonlight. She felt guilty about David and a little self-conscious; she did not much want to be alone with him, but there was no escaping it.

As they went, she asked him: "How's the rain been on Lucinda?" The district was on the edge of the monsoon country and normally they got an inch or two of summer rain in January.

"Not too good," he said. "We got about ninety points at the homestead." He meant nine-tenths of an inch.

"We did better than that," she told him. "I think we got about three inches."

"You always get more than I do," he remarked. "It's better country."

"It doesn't do us any good," she said, seeking to ease the subject for him. "It goes straight down into the ground."

"I suppose in America," he said a little bitterly, "it falls straight into the sheep's mouth."

She laughed because it seemed the

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by PERCY THROWER

MEDICINE FOR ROSES

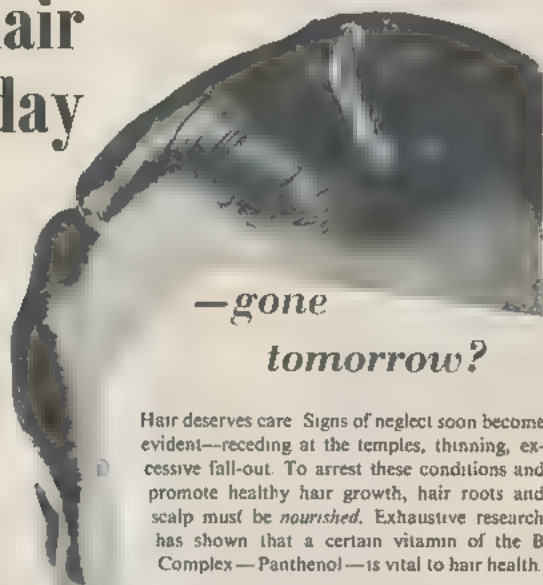
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Readers are invited to send their own original, practical and topical gardening hints to Percy Thrower. Every week from April 28, John Bull will print a hint chosen by Percy Thrower, with his own expert comments, and will pay five guineas to the reader who sent it. Address your hint to Percy Thrower, Your Garden And Mine, John Bull, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. No entry can be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed.

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best thing to do, but the implication annoyed her.

"It doesn't really," she said. "So far as I can make out they run their grazing properties, their ranches, very much the same as we do. Only they seem to have a lot more water than we have, and much smaller stations."

"Better land, in fact," he said. "Everything's better in America, isn't it?"

"If it is," she said hotly, "it's because they've worked to make it so. I've never seen men work so hard as these people, and you haven't either."

He nodded. "That's right. I just sit and smoke a pipe all day."

She softened suddenly. "I didn't mean that personally, David. You work harder than anybody in the Lunatic."

"That's all right," he said. "Don't you admire them, though?" she asked, a little wistfully. They seemed to be drawing very far apart.

"What for?" "I don't know everything," she replied. "They achieve so much. Here we've been living with oil underneath our feet, all these years. We could have found it, but we didn't ever think of it. We could have done all that they're doing here, but we just aren't up to it. Then they come along and show us how Australia should be developed and we hate their guts."

"You don't anyway," he remarked. "No, I don't," she retorted. "The only thing that people have against them is that they show us up."

"That's not what I've got against them. I don't mind them showing us up over oil, because that's not what I do. When some American comes here and shows me how to run four thousand sheep on two dud bores and does it better than I can, then I'll sit up and take notice."

She was suddenly angry with him. "I'm going home," she said. "You're just looking for any excuse to pick on them, to run them down. I think they're straight, decent people. They've brought a bit of America into the Lunatic and it's done us all good. We've even got a road because of them."

"If they find this oil there'll be a town here some day—a real town, with shops and hairdressers and cafés and picture theatres and a church or two. That's what they're doing for us in the

Lunatic, and we ought to be grateful. But all we do is to sneer at them, and run them down."

"I don't run them down," he said. "I never say a word to anyone about them. I'm very glad they're here and doing what they are. It's only when you start to run them up and talk of them as supermen that I get riled."

"I never talk of them as supermen," she said hotly.

"Yes, you do!"

"No, I don't! You're just making that up to be nasty about them."

He grinned at her. "I think perhaps we'd better change the subject."

"I think we had."

"Mind if I ask something? About something quite different?"

"What is it?"

He folded his arms and leaned back against the fender of the jeep. "Will you marry me?"

She stared at him, astonished and deflated. "Of course not! If that's a joke, David, it's a pretty poor one."

"It's not a joke," he said. "I'm serious."

"But David, you can't be!"

"I'm quite serious," he said quietly. "I'd have asked you six months ago, but for the fact I thought I'd probably be going broke this year."

Lucinda's not the best property in Australia, or even in the Lunatic. I've been in love with you for a long time as well you know."

She dropped her eyes. He had never tried to kiss her, or spoken the soft words of love that she had thrilled to read about. Yet he was quite right; she had known that he had been in love with her.

To gain time she asked "What made you ask me now then?"

He grinned at her. "Just to remind you I'm still here."

"Because I've been going about with the Americans?"

"I suppose so."

Oh David! She felt at a loss not knowing what to do. She valued David Cope but wider horizons were opening before her, horizons that led across the Pacific to the countries of the glossy Kodachromes in the big magazines she had been reading.

She knew from her half-brother Michael that money was no barrier to a Regan if she wished to travel half across the world, and it was understood



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Filling:
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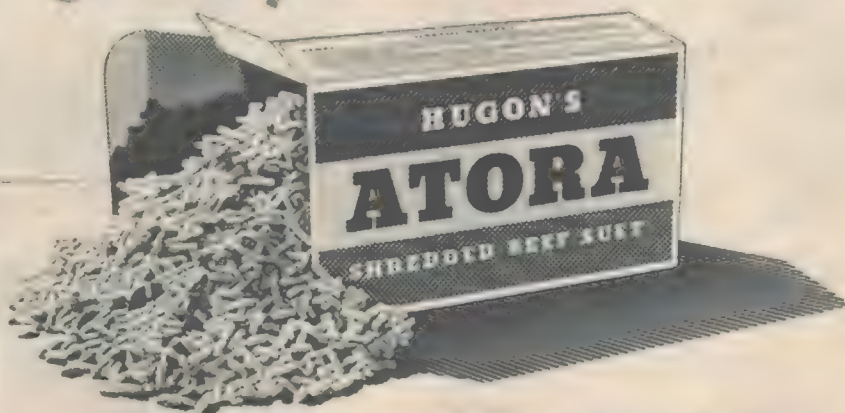
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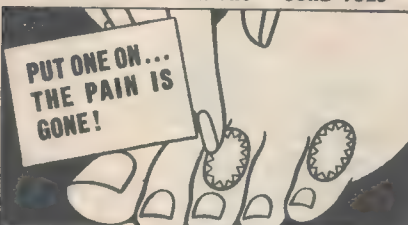
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that she would go to England, France, and Italy before very long. On her way home from England she might visit the United States and see it with her own eyes, the country of the Saturday Evening Post and Cosmopolitan. She had friends and contacts in America now, the families of the oilmen, of Hank and Ted and Tex; and, most of all, of Stanton Laird.

"I'm not marrying anybody yet," she said. "I suppose some day I'll want to get married and settled down, but that's not now. I don't know why you asked me this now, David, and I'm rather sorry that you did. Because the answer's going to be no."

He had expected nothing else, but her words gave him pain.

"I thought you'd say that," he replied, a little bitterly. "Well, let's forget it."

"There's another thing, too," she said.

"What's that?"

"I wouldn't want to marry you, David. Not that I don't like you. But we'd fight like cat and dog right from the word go."

"I don't think we would."

"I'm quite sure we would. We were fighting like cat and dog only a minute ago."

"That's different. That was over the Americans."

"If it wasn't the Americans it would be something else. We don't get on well enough to marry, David. It wouldn't work." She paused. "There's only one reason why you asked me to marry you."

"What's that?"

"Because I'm the only girl here in the Lunatic, just at the moment."

That stung him. "If that's all you think of me, we'd better cut this short," he said.

"I didn't mean to be nasty," she said gently. "But how many girls have you met in the last three years, David? Really met, I mean, to talk to like this?"

He was silent. "Not very many," he said reluctantly at last.

She nodded. "You ought to get away from here," she said. "Get away

COURAGE—2

Courage is generosity of the highest order, for the brave are prodigal of the most precious things.

Charles Caleb Colton

for a holiday, David—go down to Perth, go to dances and parties and get to know some girls." She smiled at him. "If you did that and still wanted to marry me, perhaps I'd take it as a compliment. More than I do now."

"It was meant as one."

"I know it was, David. It was very sweet of you. But the answer's no, just the same."

They stood in silence for a long time.

At last he said, "Well, that puts the lid on it. I suppose you'd rather that we didn't go on meeting?"

She thought for a moment, reluctant to break off the friendship.

"I'd be sorry if that happened," she said, "but it's up to you. So long as you can realize that I'm not marrying you or anybody else for a long time, I don't see why we shouldn't meet. There aren't so many people of our age here in the Lunatic. But if you think it's not going to work out, we'll have to give it away."

"Okay," he said heavily. "We'll leave it like that."

"Good night, David," she said in a small voice. "I'm terribly sorry."

They got into their jeeps, the starters groaned, and the jeeps moved off.

Molly went to bed troubled and upset, conscious that she had done the right thing, distressed for the pain that she had caused, uneasy that she might conceivably have made a great mistake. It was some time before she slept.

To be continued next week

**NOISE
ABATEMENT
SOCIETY**

**TAP AND ○
WALK IN**

First day at Fairley

Continued from page 11

incomprehensible to her. She was clearly lacking nothing in the matter of self-assurance. Pete always admired that quality, suspecting that he was short on it himself.

"In that case," she said, "you'll need fortifying with a drink. The caretaker's out. He went out for me, ten minutes ago. He's a bit of a character is Pop Potter—an odd mixture of philanthropy and gallantry. He leaped at the opportunity of going out to get what he calls a 'tittle-bittle' of fried fish to coax Smyrna down, because it'll give him the chance to mutter and groan for a week about the wheedling ways of women."

Pete looked at his watch. Eight thirty. He felt a cold sweat break out again along his spine.

"You've been up here four-and-a-half minutes; no longer," the girl said. "And you can't do anything until Pop Potter comes back—except tell me all about it and who you are; and to do that you must come in."

Pete gave up. He said: "Oh Lord, what a day this has been!" And went in.

In seven-and-a-half minutes he had explained, introduced himself, drunk two gin-and-vermouths, admired the girl's dress—a plain green wool with a suede belt—learned her name.

She was Rayna Milburn and she evoked in him that subtle yearning that comes upon all married men once in a while; a nostalgic dream of theatre stalls and cocktail bars, of Chelsea Bridge by moonlight, of the warm, heady perfume of femininity confined within the shadows of a taxi.

He was on edge all the time, and at the end of the seven-and-a-half minutes he twirled his empty glass and stood up.

"I really should be doing something about Susan and the kids," he said.

"We've been through all that," she said. "Dashing off in seven directions at once never solved any problems." She took his glass. "Please relax."

It was the way she said "please" that made him smile, lean back and listen while she told him of the music and radio business she owned in Fairley High Street. Relax; yes . . . it was a comfortable chair, a pleasant room, a pleasure to make acquaintance with a new neighbour. A very attractive neighbour. . . .

"That Dufy on the wall is very good," he said, and was conscious of speaking very deliberately because the two drinks taken so quickly had fuzzed his head a bit.

With very slight double vision he saw Miss Milburn turn to confirm his approval of the picture. And at the same moment he heard, clanging up from six floors below, shattering through his fuzzed brain, the terrifying sound of an ambulance bell.

Instantly he was at the window. Down in the courtyard the ambulance



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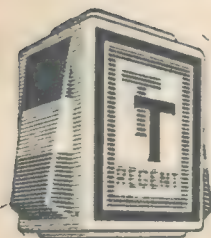
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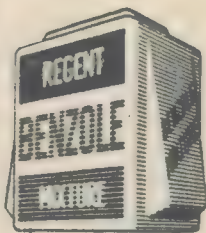
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**PACKS
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THEY'RE BEST—THEY'RE BRITISH

T.M.20

was turning in, white against the damp, shimmering asphalt. The cold clangour of the bell still echoed in his ears.

"It's them," he whispered hoarsely. "The family . . . something's happened. Oh God!"

He took exactly twenty seconds to reach the ground floor, hurling himself down five stairs at a time. In the entrance hall stood Susan, with the kids. Hamish had a bandage round his head. Dwarfed by the high sleek walls, they looked alone, forlorn, and terribly vulnerable. The colour had drained from Pete's face and he felt himself sway a little.

"Dad," Hamish said with spartan pride, "I had a naccident." He lifted the bandage to reveal a bit of sticking plaster.

"Daddy," Jane said, "there was this cat with a blue face—"

"Pete," Susan said, her voice absolutely steady, "everything's all right. Hamish fell off the banister rail and banged his head. He was coaxing some wretched Siamese cat that was roaming about upstairs."

"He was all right after he'd stopped howling, but I had to be sure there was no concussion or anything. I just took him along to the hospital so that they could test his reactions, his eyes. I had to take Janey, too, because there wasn't anybody I could leave her with. Then they brought us back in the ambulance. That's all."

Susan stopped talking. Her heart-shaped face was beginning to pucker, her eyes glistened with tears she had suppressed too long. She said: "Oh Pete, it's been a hell of a day."

"Dad," Hamish said, "that ambulance was a Daimler, it was, the man at the hoshpital tested my eyes, side to side—like this—to see if they moved all right. Up and down he did, too, he tested them, the man at the hoshpital."

"That little cat upstairs is which I want," Jane said irrelevantly. "Not

heaven Miss Milburn had the wit to hear it. "You must tell me all about it sometime," she said sweetly; and went.

With the children at last in bed, it seemed as if they had only come to the beginning of the day. Reproaches, recriminations and the awful muddle of the flat had all still to be faced.

But they suddenly resolved into focus as Susan said: "If only you could have got home."

Could have. Not: If you'd come home like you promised. . . .

Relief flooded through him. "Darling," he said gently, "you must have had a hell of a day. Before we begin mopping-up operations let's sit down and smoke a cigarette. I want you to tell me about it."

SHE sat among the disorganized furniture and the litter of bits of straw the removal men had left and told him. The worst thing had been not knowing anyone, the awful feeling of isolation.

"I knocked timidly on one or two doors," she said, "but everyone seemed to be out. In this whole block there only seemed to be a Siamese cat, and even he caused trouble."

She, Pete corrected her, but inaudibly. He sat there quietly listening to Susan's troubles and he could tell how it was for a woman, bereft of neighbours and husband, in a strange, cold and unimaginably dreary flat with the knowledge that this might be her home for ever. Reason would tell her that the neighbours she'd lost would be replaced in time and that things would work out; but reason would have no place in a woman's reckoning at such a moment.

He reached out and lit her cigarette. Her face was grubby and her hair tousled; but in the look she gave him there was an absolute dependence, a certainty that he would never fail her.

He wanted to tell her that it had been one of those ghastly days for him, too, but he saw that she knew. There was no need to tell her.

He put his arm around her. "Not a thing more for you tonight, honey. You've had enough. Bed!"

He himself went and found sheets and blankets—they were at the bottom of the cases with the china—and made up one of the beds. When he returned she was crying gently.

"Oh, Pete, if only you knew how I felt—alone here, Hamish streaming with blood. He's been streaming with blood before and I haven't worried for more than ten seconds except to make sure that it was nothing vital; but this time. . . ."

"When we were at Caroline Terrace and he fell over or Janey cut herself on something I never needed help. I could cope: I never asked anybody to help me or give me advice. I'm their mother—I know. But all I wanted here was someone to fly to. It's so foolish. But it was the *aloneness* of it all. I think I hate this place."

"You won't for long. Remember how we said where everything would go—how it all fits in, even the copper lustre jug? It's too smart and modern and not a bit like the sort of home we meant to have. But whichever way you look at it, it's home. We're the people who make it. And you'll soon know people. That girl who came to the door—she lives above. Tell you all about her in the morning. She's nice."

"She looks," said Susan with sudden strength, "as if she might be the sort of girl men like."

"I daresay she is," Pete said with studied carelessness. "To tell you the truth I didn't notice. Sleep now. I'll be in when I've done a bit of clearing."

He took off his coat and rolled up his sleeves and started on the flat. He did everything that could be done fairly noiselessly. It took him three hours. At midnight he looked round with satisfaction: the flat was reasonably straight; at least they'd be able to find dishes for breakfast.

Feeling as if he'd been kicked by a horse, he went to bed. As he wound and set the alarm Susan woke up. It was miraculous how three hours' sleep had restored her freshness. A shaft of pale moonlight lay across her bed and

COURAGE—3

True courage is to do without witnesses everything that one is capable of doing before all the world.

Le Rochefoucauld

that actual little cat but one like it. For me."

"We've got mice in the flat," Hamish said wheedlingly.

"Rats, I expect," said Jane.

Susan said, "Oh, be quiet!" There was an edge of desperation to her voice.

Pete was still overwhelmed. He thought: *If I was even fifty per cent efficient as a husband I'd be ready with the comforting word, the understanding gesture.* But all he managed to say was: "Well, it's no good standing here."

They went up to the flat. The place seemed full of muddled furniture and utensils cluttered the kitchen. They moved from room to room in semi-darkness because there was only one light bulb unpacked. A silent fury of despair possessed them and through it they spoke in polite monosyllables for the benefit of the children.

"Everywhere is a higgledy-piggledy," Jane said blandly.

"Undress," Pete said wearily. "For heaven's sake, be quick."

As he was helping her with her pyjama buttons the doorbell rang. It was Miss Milburn, wondering if everything was all right.

"Why, yes," Pete said. He was conscious of suppressing an urgent warmth in his own voice, of Miss Milburn's concerned but dazzling smile, of the children, behind him, behaving with sudden uninhibited vulgarity, and of Susan peering from the kitchen. "Everything's all right; and thank you."

He had the wisdom to induce a note of finality into his voice; and thank

Spot the Lawbreaker

Somewhere in this scene, the law is being broken. Can you see where? A barrister gives the answer on page 42



DRAWN BY RONALD LAMPITT

Pete could see that her eyes were wide open.

He sensed that he had better pretend not to notice. He escaped and went to the bathroom, spent an unnecessarily long time in sorting out tooth-brushes and putting them in the rack. *She'll be asleep again by the time I get back.*

She wasn't.

"Pete," she whispered when he was at last in bed. "You asleep?"

"Yes," he mumbled. Whatever she had to say, he knew by her way of broaching it that his answer would require evasion.

"I thought you weren't."

There was a pause and Pete thought: *In just under eight hours I leave for the office again. Fife. Wylie Glass. Conference. Promotion campaign.*

"When you said about not noticing Upstairs, if she was the sort of girl men liked—"

Oh Lord! thought Pete. *Here it comes.*

"—you ought never to have begun by saying 'to tell you the truth.' Do you know that whenever you begin with that or 'as a matter of fact' I know it's going to be a thundering big lie? Always. Do you know that?"

"Oh!" Pete said. The moonlight had shifted a little. Her eyes were in shadow now, but he knew she was watching him. It was a curious thing about women that however much they loved you they enjoyed watching you fall into traps of your own setting.

"Yes," he said. "I know it too darn well; I just don't know why I don't avoid that wide-open chasm instead of falling right into it. I'm nineteen different kinds of a fathead."

A pause again. Then Susan said, with devastating determination not to be sidetracked: "Then she is the sort of girl men like? Upstairs, I mean."

PETE closed his eyes. "Yes. She's that sort of girl. Going to make something of it?"

He heard Susan sigh gently—it was the sigh he recognized as indicative of feminine triumph.

"No. I just didn't want you to think you'd fooled me."

Beyond the uncurtained windows in the now miraculously clear sky, a star fell, briefly blazing for a golden instant. An omen? A new baby? A fortune?

He didn't know, and it didn't matter. Suddenly life seemed pretty good to him as it was. He had Susan, and the kids. And a home. And a job. The rest didn't matter at all. THE END

This is my life

Continued from page 25

joke was on you. It was a commercial programme in time hired out by Radio Eireann, and Spiro was owner and managing director of a dyeing and cleaning firm which sponsored the show. It was unforgivable, but we became Spotless and Stainless and some of the patter we used makes me blush now to think of it.

I was still feeling awkward about some pronunciations and the "u" sounds, which had bothered me so much in elocution class and on the stage, were still an embarrassment. One day, during my K. and S. show, I was so conscious of this that instead of saying "pure food products" I said "poor food products"—a slip that might be expected to have more severe consequences in a commercial plug than in a public service broadcasting programme. To my astonishment, nobody complained — not even the sponsors.

At this time, I was listening a lot to the B.B.C., and especially to a boxing commentator named Stewart MacPherson. His assurance, fast talk and novel turn of phrase intrigued me. As my admiration for MacPherson grew, so did my conviction that a job on the B.B.C. was the aim of all broadcasters. I wrote to London introducing myself and asking about the prospects of doing some programmes there. The reply was a long way from being encouraging. I wrote regularly after that, and once packed several recordings of my commentaries off to the B.B.C.

Not surprisingly, for the corporation was well off for commentators, I encountered a massive indifference to whatever talents I thought I possessed. In Dublin I was too far away to be of much use, and the B.B.C. saw no point in having me come across the Irish Sea for an audition.

This frustration apart, things were going better, and presently I was offered what I had wanted for some time, an interview programme. We called it *Microphone Parade*, and its nearest B.B.C. equivalent would be *In Town Tonight*. All through the week I interviewed visitors to Dublin from all over the world, tying up the recordings into a complete Saturday night show.

I met Gene Tunney this way, Joe Baksi, Woodcock's conqueror, and Jack Train with whom, much later on, I was to work for the B.B.C. It was a fascinating programme to do, and full of novelty, but it also made plain to me that I had reached saturation with

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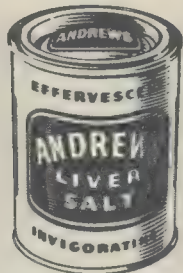
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Radio Eireann. Once more I pelted the B.B.C. with reminders and recordings of my work.

The talk of Dublin around this time was a quip-cracking quiz master named Eddie Byrne whose give-away show, *Double Or Nothing*, was packing the Theatre Royal night after night. I had seen it two or three times as a member of the audience when, right out of the blue, I was invited to meet the theatre chiefs, who offered me a comparable job to Byrne's in their theatre at Limerick.

At £40 a week for the run it sounded fine; but there was the question of my radio shows. I agreed to the proposal on condition that I could keep my two sponsored programmes running—my second line of defence was still with me. As Limerick lies 123 miles south of Dublin, it seemed a difficult combination. Only with a car could I be sure of visiting Dublin on Thursdays and Fridays for my lunch-time radio commitments and getting back to Limerick the same nights for the stage shows.

I invested £75 in a battered and obsolete Morris 8 two-seater sports car and, the day before I was due to leave for Limerick, took my first driving lesson from a friend. After a couple of hours I dropped him off and drove to the National Stadium for a boxing commentary. Next night, an acquaintance hailing from Limerick joined me on the run and I welcomed his company, for as well as being a driver of some experience he was also a useful mechanic. I reckoned the chances of a breakdown were at least even.

It was a bitterly cold, damp night with the rain falling hard, and the car was like a colander. We must have done seventy miles before the engine wheezed, spluttered and died. My co-driver looked under the bonnet, shrugged helplessly, and said: "Try the starter. Let's hope she'll fire." There was no response, except that the

COURAGE—4

A stout heart breaks bad
luck.

Cervantes

starter knob came out farther than it should have done. Apart from an army camp down the road there was nothing for miles. We stuck up a couple of newspapers to keep out the draughts and settled down for the night. . . .

The road from Dublin to Limerick is flat and featureless, but it had all the challenge of a Monte Carlo Rally for me and my car. Each week after the Wednesday night show in Limerick I would set out for Dublin, arriving home around four o'clock in the morning. There was time for only a few hours' sleep before the broadcast.

I knew that sooner or later I would be in a jam, especially now that the ancient car was taking extra punishment because of the hectic social life I was leading in Limerick and its environs. Through the *Double Or Nothing* show, in which competitors from the audience answered questions for gifts and cash prizes, I made a number of friends, many of them from the nearby Shannon Airport. It was a sort of clearing house for the Western world, and the practical side of the American drive in commercial aviation was everywhere in evidence. Huge U.S. air transports were parked all over the place and, as well as aircrews, there were hundreds of British, Irish and American construction workers.

When the weekend weather was good, whole parties of us would drive off in a convoy of cars to Galway, and swim in the sea until well after nightfall. Back in Limerick we would keep the party going into the small hours in one of the bona-fide houses selling late drinks, or in a club to which we belonged. It was a breathlessly hectic existence, the sort that causes one to marvel in retrospect at one's endurance.

Fortunately for me, these wild excursions were mostly confined to the weekends, though my Wednesday and

Thursday shuttling between Limerick and Dublin was almost as exacting. Tiring of the overnight journeys, I cut the thing finer and took to driving to Dublin and back the same day. After the show one night, the theatre stage manager, a quiet little man, confided to me that he had never even seen Dublin. "Would you like to come up with me this Thursday?" I asked him.

Alex said he would, but that he intended to go fishing all Wednesday night. I collected him on the Shannon Bridge at six o'clock in the morning, and somehow he got his rod and tackle into the back of the car.

In Dublin, I left him to look around while I recorded my disc programme. It was a gloriously sunny day, and on the return journey I pushed back the hood and prepared for a pleasant run. It was possible, after a little time, to run the car up to 55 m.p.h., and we were travelling at this speed as we approached Monasterevan.

I remembered too late the sharp bend leading into the village street: a wall loomed up, I put my foot on the brake pedal, and the tiny car skidded violently. It slewed round and the off-side rear wheel hit the kerb with such a jolt that the door on my side broke off. I was flung into the dusty street, and I watched the rest of the incident in a sort of dazed slow-motion.

Alex, who had never driven in his life, snatched at the steering wheel and I saw with dread that the car was heading straight for the doorway of a house on the far side of the street. I expected it to crash straight into the front room, but Alex tugged the wheel just enough for the car to strike between the door jamb and the adjacent wall of a pub. A drainpipe clattered down in fragments. The other car door flew off and Alex sat there, looking crestfallen rather than damaged. I was bruised and filthy, but apparently I had broken no bones. I was already trying to pull the car off the wall when a big man in his shirtsleeves appeared in the house doorway.

I knew by his trousers that he was a policeman.

A humane man, he was more concerned about us than about the house and after ensuring that we were little the worse, he glanced at the broken stonework and shrugged, saying, "Ah well—what's the use?" By now, the village was coming to life. The local garage man had started to fix the car when the innkeeper appeared, worried about his drainpipe. He summoned a drainpipe expert, who assessed the damage instantly. "Thirty bob," he said.

I handed this over to the innkeeper. Next, the garage man explained that if we drove slowly the rest of the way there was no reason why we shouldn't make Limerick.

"This is a miracle," I said. "How much?"

"Half a crown," he said.

Poor Alex was speechless, and doubtless already determined that never

Spot the Lawbreaker

See page 41



THE Highway Act of 1835 makes it an offence to play any game on the highway to the annoyance of passers-by. And in 1869, says a barrister-at-law, a bench of magistrates decided that a bicycle race was a game within the meaning of the Act. Prosecutions are rare, but technically, races on the highway are illegal if they annoy other road users. Penalty: up to £2.

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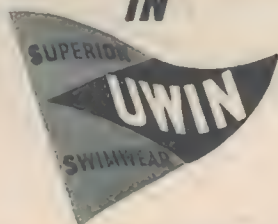
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Read KATHLEEN RICHARDS' hints and tips on next page

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by KATHLEEN RICHARDS

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If he's just a bit fussy, and knows what's what ...

HE'S FOR MUSHROOM SOUP. If you want a rich beginning to a luxury meal, there's nothing like it. Serve it with croutons (fried bread diced small). That mushroomy taste—so subtle, so unmistakable, will make him certain you've got good taste too.



Batchelors Soup Mixes

14

THICK PEA • MUSHROOM
CHICKEN NOODLE
VEGETABLE • ONION

again would he leave his beloved Limerick.

The show had already started when we crawled into the town, Alex was the first to enter the theatre carrying the front bumper, the radiator grille and other remnants and someone stopped him on the stairs and asked casually: "Oh, what's happened to Andrews? Is he killed?"

There was no time to change, or even to wash. I went onstage as I was, grimy and tattered, and told the audience what had happened.

I have driven to Limerick, in more respectable cars and in happier circumstances, often since then. I always go through Monasterevan, and to this day that drainpipe has not been fixed.

My contacts with the American airline people at Shannon gave me an idea for my disc programme. It occurred to me that if I could only get freshly cut discs straight from the United States, I could give my show a boost and a reputation for topicality. The Americans liked the suggestion and when the first batch of records was flown in from New York to Shannon, they assigned one of their pilots to fly me and the records on the last lap to Dublin, a publicity stunt that came off well.

The plane we used was a Flying Flea which was the personal property of the pilot, whom I knew as Tony. The trip took only two hours and afterwards I persuaded Tony to fly me to Dublin regularly for my Thursday and Friday programmes. We hedgehopped most of the way at a 60-m.p.h. clip.

Early one morning, Tony telephoned to say that he would be unable to take me to Dublin that day as he had been assigned suddenly to a trans-Continental flight. "Sorry about this," he said. "It just can't be helped." At eleven o'clock that morning I had an interview to record with Wilfred Pickles, who was visiting Dublin, for the following Saturday's *Microphone Parade*. I explained this to Tony, and he offered to try to find another pilot willing to fly me. He was back on the line within ten minutes.

"Okay," he said. "There's a character here called Sam Pratt who'll take you. Meet him at the airport at eight o'clock." I decided to drive to Shannon and it was lucky that I set off early, for the car wouldn't start and I had to hitch-hike instead.

Sam turned out to be an elongated Texan with an elongated drawl and he didn't use two words where one would do.

We climbed aboard the Flea and were flying steadily over the fields at something between sixty and seventy miles an hour when Sam turned round in the open cockpit in front and hollered: "Smoke?"

Because Tony had always made an insistent point about no-smoking on account of the danger from the fuel fumes, I asked him to say it again.

"Smoke?" His voice came louder downwind.

"Yes," I said, still rather puzzled. Suddenly, the tiny plane zoomed into a vertical dive. My stomach left me. We hopped a tall tree and a hedge, and then we were down rather uncomfortably in a cultivated field.

Sam climbed out and I followed. "Okay," he said. "Have a Camel."

When we were aboard again, Sam exasperatedly discovered that we were short of fuel, and said that we could not possibly risk flying on. We took to the road, until we came to a filling station, where we bought several gallons of petrol in cans, enough to get us to Dublin.

I was already concerned about the delays, and felt more than slightly annoyed with Sam, but worse was to happen. Over Dublin Airport, Sam could not get landing permission. Without a radio, he circled tightly, wagging his wings without response. When finally we did get in, it was ten minutes past eleven and I knew someone else would already be doing the Pickles interview.

I made no further interview arrangements after this.

Double Or Nothing, which had

OPEN TO VIEW

by JAMES LEES-MILNE

Drawn by ROWLAND HILDER



A philosopher came to Cheyne Row—to report a disaster to his friend Carlyle

ON March 6, 1835, John Stuart Mill, a promising young philosopher, put on his stovepipe hat, took up his walking-stick and set forth unhappily to call on his friends in Chelsea. They were Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle, recently come from Scotland and now living at No. 5 (today No. 24) Cheyne Row.

He was about to confess that his housemaid had that morning lit the fire with the manuscript of the book his friend had sent him to read—the great history of the French Revolution.

Carlyle was dumbfounded. But he listened to the devastating news with characteristic composure and within a month began the book all over again. "My will is not conquered," he bravely confided to his journal. And on September 21 he recorded: "Finished that unutterable burnt MS."

In 1837 the rewritten *French Revolution* was published, and Carlyle's reputation as the leading historian of the nineteenth century was firmly established. *Hero-Worship*, *Oliver Cromwell* and *Frederick The Great* were all written later, either in the

first-floor library or in the specially built soundproof attic. From the ground-floor dining-room Jane Carlyle dispatched hundreds of letters which are among the most brilliant in English literature.

And so the married life of this gifted and neurotic couple proceeded. Mrs. Carlyle was at times tormented by her husband's ill-temper or his mild flirtations with society ladies who lionized him. He was often goaded by her jealousy and nagging. Yet, on the whole, they were deeply devoted.

In their Chelsea home—now owned by the National Trust and filled with relics of their lives and work—they received many eminent people; among their visitors were Count D'Orsay and Lady Blessington, Emerson, Browning, Tennyson (who smoked with Carlyle in the back garden) and Ruskin.

How to get there: Cheyne Row, Chelsea, can be reached by bus (routes 39, 45 and 49 to Cheyne Walk, or routes 11, 19 and 22 along King's Road). *Open:* weekdays, 10 a.m. till 6, or dusk.

originally begun on a five weeks' arrangement, was regularly extended. I kept up the suitcase existence, and had a radio set installed in my dressing-room to keep abreast of what was happening at Radio Eireann for the radio column I was writing for the *Irish Independent*.

After about five months in Limerick, however, I was invited to take over the same show at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. Eddie Byrne was moving out to go into films and other work.

I accepted at once, for it seemed a perfect arrangement: I was tiring not only of the constant journeyings but also of the high life at Shannon, which was also becoming too expensive for my peace of mind. In spite of my fairly

good income, I was saving nothing.

For the Dublin audiences, *Double Or Nothing* was worked on a slightly different formula and included bigger prizes—the jackpot sometimes would be a motor-car, and Thursday was ladies' night. And instead of having people answering questions, I would often have them performing strange manoeuvres such as walking a straight line under all kinds of duress.

The pranksome students from the National University were the people we mostly had to watch: some of them saw easy money in the show, and tried to come up repeatedly. I had to send many a student off the stage after recognizing a familiar face, though mostly they never got as far as that

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One ladies' night, I found myself face to face with a slinky blonde who hipped her way over to the microphone and replied with some indignation when I suggested I had seen her before. It seemed that I had muffed this one: I wasn't sure about it, and I just had to take her word.

When it came to the gimmick in which I asked her to sing, she said she could not do this because she had a heavy cold. She kept harping on this cold, and I didn't know why. For the jackpot, she was one of three women who had to walk a slippery pole and she made it so easily that I marvelled at her confidence and athletic prowess.

Months later, at a dance in a hall run by a friend of mine named Lorcan Bourke, a girl came up to me and mentioned that her student brother had twice won prizes on my show, once when he was dressed as a woman.

Lorcan, a fresh-complexioned man with black curly hair, was in the bar of the Theatre Royal after one of my *Double Or Nothing* shows and beckoned me over for a drink when I walked in. He introduced me to his wife and his daughter, who was as dark as Lorcan and with eyes full of gaiety and mischief. Her name was Grainne, and we were soon getting on so well that I suggested seeing her home. It was pouring down outside, and the car had leaks as well as draughts, and I hoped that she wouldn't mind very much. I switched on the ignition—and then remembered that I was out of petrol. I was also out of ready cash. I turned to Grainne and said awkwardly: "Can you lend me ten bob for some petrol?"

It was an old-fashioned look I got, but she handed me the money from her handbag. After leaving Grainne, I wondered all the way home what she must have thought of a man who offers to drive her home and then asks for the petrol money. Nevertheless, we took to meeting occasionally; for my part, it would have been oftener but for the amount of work I was now doing. The Dublin job had put me right back in circulation with Radio Eireann, and only if there had been eight days in a week could I have done any more.

Again, I wrote to the B.B.C., this time to S. J. de Lotbinière, Head of Outside Broadcasts, asking about the possibility of doing some sports commentaries. I enclosed one or two recordings. By return, I received a politely clinical letter explaining that my voice was not exactly right and repeating that it would not be possible

to bring me all the way from Ireland for a test.

For a time, despite the *Double Or Nothing* run and all the work I was getting from Radio Eireann, I felt acutely frustrated as further letters to other B.B.C. departments failed to produce any worthwhile results. My mother and father were somewhat put out that I should even contemplate leaving Ireland; yet, much as I loved the country, I felt that I had reached an impasse in Dublin. The B.B.C. offered a bigger potential future.

Then, quite unexpectedly, two things happened which changed the picture completely for me. For one of my Saturday night *Microphone Parade* programmes, I interviewed the man who was then Controller of the B.B.C. Light Programme, Tom Chalmers. He hinted that I might find some encouragement if I were in London. This was only a

COURAGE—5

Courage, like cowardice, is undoubtedly contagious, but some persons are not liable to catch it.

Archibald Prentice

glimmer of hope, but it dispelled my growing feeling that the B.B.C. would not be interested in me whether I was in Tottenham or Tipperary.

The other significant thing was the arrival at the Theatre Royal of Joe Loss, the sleek-haired and amiable business man and band leader, with whom I got on well right from the start. Joe said he enjoyed my *Double Or Nothing* spot and that he would like to take me with the band on a music-hall tour of England. It looked like the break I had been seeking. It meant that I could really serenade those B.B.C. producers on their own doorstep, and perhaps, with luck, build a reputation like Stewart MacPherson's.

Some of the people I respected most considered it was too big a risk, for it would mean cutting away from everything that had taken me almost nine years to build. I saw it rather differently. Failure would mean a quiet return and picking up the old threads again—but what would my friends think, and the family, and Grainne? I had to make a success of it. I packed a hold-all and flew to London.

NEXT WEEK: I think of marriage—and change my mind



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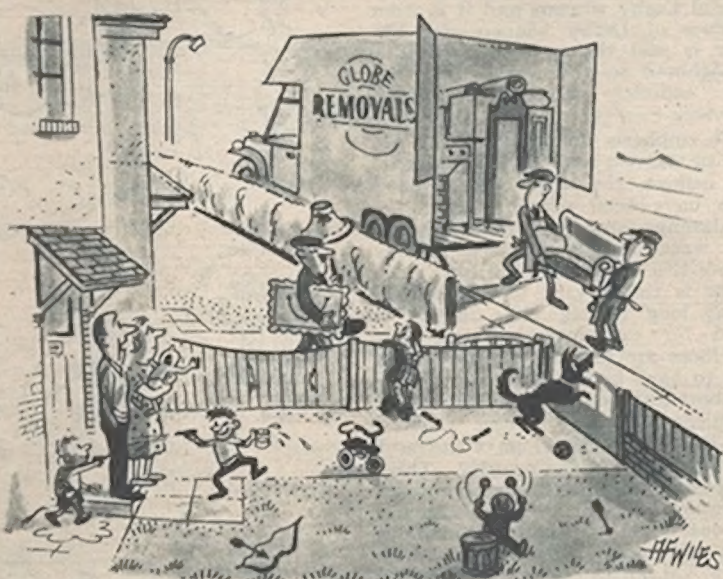


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Crisis on the Turf

Continued from page 13

the £60,000, £53,000 and £50,000 paid for Nearco, Tracery and Captain Cuttle within the last fifty years, the enormous sums paid today for successful horses underlines the need for quick returns in modern racing.

Breeding is a lottery. The most impeccably bred yearling can prove a failure, the most expensive stallion, with a dazzling record on the racecourse, can get worthless stock, but the owners or associations who can afford the big prices are usually in the business on a long-term basis. The small owner, the man or woman who has one or a few horses in training for the love of the game—a class which in numbers dominates the list of owners—is not in racing on a long-term basis. And for him or her, quick returns are crucial: it is a case of "win early or get out." The same consideration affects that other unit which is becoming annually rarer on the Turf, and without which racing will be infinitely the poorer—the small trainer.

Jock Halsey, at thirty-four one of the youngest trainers in Britain, well illustrates the problems of both classes. Halsey trains at Newmarket, at Somerville Lodge, a severe, stone-built house adjoining a compact yard with sixteen stalls. Horses are in his blood. His father, Claude Halsey, trained them for nearly fifty years. Now Jock, whose father died last year, has just been granted his licence.

Halsey knows what he is up against. He is aware that there isn't a Tulyar, a Bahram or a Nimbus in his yard. He had no fashionable or successful jockey retained to ride his owners' horses; his name, for this season at least, will be very far down the winning trainers' list, if it figures there at all. With none of his horses entered in the classics or other valuable races, what can Halsey's owners expect to win in prize money this season?

He has a nice filly called Bernice—by the young and successful sire Palestine—with which he might win a two-year-old race early on. He had three or four other two-year-olds and the three-year-old Flossie Fewclothes (Halsey winces at the name) which could come along very well. But with the many imponderables—accident, coughing epidemics, prolonged drought, cancellation of meetings—a stable of his size has little margin of error.

"The prize money I could win," says Halsey, "would never cover my costs unless I had a terrific run of luck. With a weekly bill of £70 for my lads, with hay at £17 and oats at £33 a ton, I couldn't even hope to break even." Nor, he adds, could his owners, who pay him between £8 and £10 a week for each of their horses.

That fee is for training only, for

keeping the horse and getting it fit for racing. Added to that are expenses for travelling, entries, veterinary attention, farrier's fees, horse clothing and tackle, and a dozen other items—all adding up to a sum which is absurdly above any possible accumulation of prize money to be picked up by a stable which has not one or more above-the-average horses in its yard.

A horse of moderate class might with luck win a £200 plate. When the percentage paid to the second and third is subtracted, there is about £150 left. Ten per cent of this is set aside for the trainer, and a similar sum for his jockey. Not much remains, but the owner must still put his hand in his pocket. He has to give the traditional tip to the man who "does" the horse, and he must pay the cost of sending it to the meeting, a heavy item when the course might be anything up to two hundred miles away. When all the overheads are cleared, the lucky owner will be glad to bank £50. Should he be fortunate enough to own a horse good enough to appear in a classic field, he must win a valuable race if he is to meet the bill for the jockey's

COURAGE—6

It is easier to use a gun than to show courage.

H. M. Tomlinson

present, the entry fees and the other incidentals necessary to run a horse in the more costly events.

The result is that all but the richest, luckiest and most successful owners and trainers must keep going by the only expedient left to them—betting. And betting, with its necessity for secrecy and ruse, is not the healthiest economic basis for the sport.

With such a prospect, it is surprising that a man like Jock Halsey chooses racing for a career. His reply is encouraging. "My family has been in racing for years," says Halsey, "and I love it. I'll need a lot of luck, especially in my first season. The going is hard for all of us, but I can't think of any job I would rather do."

The fact that of Halsey's sixteen horses twelve are two-year-olds is significant of another disquieting aspect of racing. With costs as high as they are today owners cannot afford to keep a horse "eating its head off" at £10 a week for three or four years. However promising a youngster might be, the expense of keeping it three years before racing it seriously is prohibitive for the majority of owners.

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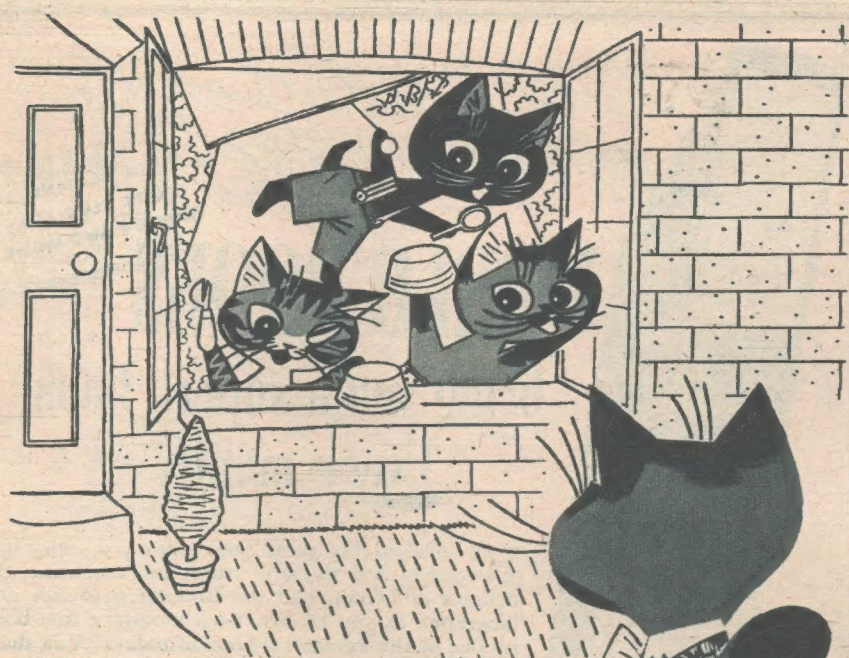
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necessity by producing short-running, quick-maturing animals. Sires which get such fast young stock are not likely to breed Derby winners and it is from the lines of Derby winners—for the Derby is still the greatest test of a thoroughbred in the world—that the great, enduring strands of British bloodstock emerge.

This emphasis on speed at the expense of stamina and staying power is, some believe, the reason why French horses have been winning an undue and alarming proportion of our classic races since the war. Jock Halsey deplores this as much as the next man. But he is the servant of his owners, and as long as big prize money is offered for early-maturing two-year-olds, those are the animals he will be likely to have in his yard.

A short distance from Halsey's place is Freemason Lodge, where Captain Boyd-Rochfort controls one of the most powerful stables in the country. There are seventy stalls in his yard and all of them are full. Freemason Lodge has sent out some of the most famous horses of modern times, and trains those Royal horses which are not leased from the National Stud. Boyd-Rochfort is a "big" trainer; some of his clients are very rich men and women who breed their own horses at private studs. Most of his horses are aristocrats, and if any stable could be expected to make a profit, that run by this experienced, astute and profoundly knowledgeable man would come to mind. Bruce Hobbs, the assistant trainer—at the age of seventeen he won the Grand National on Battleship in 1938 has a different story to tell.

"In an average year," says Hobbs, "relying on prize money alone, we just about break even. In a big stable, variety is possible and a bad run of luck can be survived." Hobbs believes that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the bloodstock side of racing, but he is emphatic that the rising costs of the game are edging out the small trainer and the small client.

High costs and diminishing prize money, says Hobbs, are also indirectly responsible for a surprising revolution in the racing world: the influx of women to the racing stables. Five or six years ago there were two girls employed in the Newmarket stables; now there are over seventy. Captain Boyd-Rochfort has no fewer than eight. "We are glad to have the girls," Hobbs insists, "and are more than pleased with the way they work. But the fact that we employ them at all means that the young men and boys are no longer drawn to make their lives among horses. With higher paid and less arduous jobs for the having, there is a drift away from the stables."

ONE of the stars at Freemason Lodge is a bay filly called Mamounia, who was the highest priced yearling—17,500 guineas—in 1954. Mamounia, entered in both the One Thousand Guineas and the Oaks this season, is "done" and ridden in her work by June Davie, a twenty-year-old girl from the Isle of Sheppey. June Davie, who got her job in Freemason Lodge by answering an advertisement in a sporting paper, worked in a riding stable near her home for many years. But teaching children to ride on a sleepy hack is a very different thing from cantering a well-grown and very valuable thoroughbred across the Limekilns on a cold Newmarket morning.

June Davie, slim, dark and pretty, finds no difficulty. "Mamounia is a kindly sort," she says, "and seems to go well for me." June Davie and her seven companions, some of whom couldn't ride before they came to Newmarket, get through exactly the same work as the stable lads—an eight-hour day, "doing" and working two horses in an early morning and midday shift, with every third Sunday off. Her second charge is a horse called Great Success, and she sometimes finds herself astride Agreement, belonging to the Queen.

As the girls earn £7 a week, while an apprentice lad gets £2 15s., it might be thought that there is jealousy and ostracism in the yard—even though the apprentices may one day be earning



big money as jockeys. "If the lads resent us," says June Davie, "they don't show it. They seem to go out of their way to help." By the way she handles her horses June Davie could not need help very often, and Bruce Hobbs confirms that Mamounia, Great Success and Agreement are in very good hands.

One filly June Davie and everyone at Freemason Lodge remembers with pride is Meld, who was unbeaten in the One Thousand Guineas, the Oaks, St. Leger and Coronation Stakes last year—the only four races for which she was started—won £42,562 for her owner, Lady Zia Wernher, and enabled Captain Boyd-Rochfort to become the season's leading trainer.

As public entertainment, racing must be made attractive. It seems too evident to say that people go to the racecourse to watch horses compete against each other, but the truism is significant. For, eventually, the public will not patronize the racecourse to see bad or indifferent horses run. Racing has its stars and its personalities. Horses like the great stayer Brown Jack, who won the longest race in the calendar—the Queen Alexandra Stakes—six years in succession, brought record crowds to Ascot in the early thirties. Bahram, who won the Triple Crown in 1935, Dante and the Royal filly Sun Chariot, the mighty Tulyar, brilliant sprinters like The Bug and Myrobella—such names in the entries attract the public as surely as the name of a famous actress on a playbill.

Meld, who has every virtue which can be asked of a racehorse—stamina and speed, soundness and courage added to a calm temperament and great beauty—not only brought the public through the turnstiles but will, if her record at the stud equals her prowess as a racehorse, ensure that some at least of the coming generations of the British thoroughbred are the equal of the great names of the past.

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RACE-PROVED FOR ROAD SERVICE

get sweet relief from INDIGESTION - NOW!

TROUBLE-FREE EATING.

You who suffer from indigestion and dread it so—get more wonderful relief now—just suck a couple of Moorland Antacid Tablets slowly and repeat the dose when necessary. Think of it—being free to eat what you like and enjoy it!

HEALTHY DIGESTION.

Moorlands are indigestion tablets with a difference—sugar-sweetened, they contain carefully selected ingredients balanced to control the right amount of acid necessary for healthy digestion.

MOORLANDS ACT QUICKLY!

In Moorlands you have the ideal remedy to combat pain and discomfort caused by Gastritis, Heartburn, Flatulence, Dyspepsia, that 'full-up' feeling and other less serious stomach upsets. If Moorlands fail to bring relief medical advice should be sought.

FOR RESTFUL NIGHTS.

Sleeplessness is often caused by indigestion. Take two Moorlands last thing at night. You'll be grateful, too, for the refreshing taste in your mouth on waking.

For your stomach's sake be ready to take Moorlands at the first sign of indigestion—keep a roll in your pocket or



handbag. Like millions of former sufferers you will bless the day you discovered Moorlands.

UNSOLICITED TRIBUTES.

"Moorlands are worth their weight in gold," says Mr. H. of Ashton-under-Lyne. Other letters of gratitude include: "I shall not hesitate to recommend them as much as possible." "I always carry a roll wherever I go." "Sweet relief they surely are," etc., etc.

Get a packet at your chemist. 4 handy pocket rolls (40 tablets) in each 1/21d. packet. Double the quantity 2/3d.



MOORLAND

antacid INDIGESTION tablets
BRING SWEET RELIEF

EXAMPLE.....

BULLET.....

EX.....

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ADDED OPPORTUNITY—3 "Bullets" for 1s. ONLY

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10-in-1 BONUS

Grand 10-in-1 Bonus of luxuries for the kitchen to each of the 20 chief winners whose successful *Bullet* was one of five or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

2,033 CLOSING POSTMARK I agree to rules and enclose P.O.
MONDAY, APRIL 9 Value..... No.....

Signed.....

Address.....

GET YOUR
BULLETIN

STICK 2½d. STAMP here for latest available issue of the new FOUR-IN-ONE Bulletin.

834

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 2,033, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.).

NEXT WEEK LONDON / PARIS SURPRISE OFFER

What we like about Springtime is *Wall's!*



Wall's is one of the joys of spring—or of any other season.
For, whatever the weather, Wall's brings happiness
everywhere it goes. Are *your* family fond of Wall's?
Of course, they are. Any time, anywhere.
Take some home for them today! *Family Bricks 1/6d. Tubs 6d.*

LOTS OF LOVELY VARIETIES!

Strawberry, Vanilla, Milk Chocolate, Coffee.

... and from time to time 'Specials' such as—



NUT CRUNCH



BLACKCURRANT



TAKE HOME SOME *Wall's* —FOR THE JOY IT GIVES!